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THE
CATHOLIC CHURCH.

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A HISTORY
OF
THE CATHOLIC CHURCH
OF
JESUS CHRIST

FROM THE DEATH OF SAINT JOHN
TO THE MIDDLE OF THE SECOND CENTURY:

INCLUDING AN ACCOUNT OF THE
ORIGINAL ORGANISATION OF THE CHRISTIAN MINISTRY
AND THE GROWTH OF EPISCOPACY.

BY
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בִּיקוּנַת בֵּית דִּן אֶלְהֵנִי

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VENI, CREATOR SPIRITUS,
Mentes tuorum visita,
Imple superna gratia,
Quæ Tu creasti, pectora.

Qui Paracletus diceris,
Donum Dei Altissimi ;
Fons vivus, Ignis, Charitas,
Et spiritalis Unctio.

Tu Septiformis munere,
Dexteræ Dei Tu Digitus ;
Tu rite promissum Patris,
Sermonem ditans guttura.

Accende lumen sensibus,
Infunde amorem cordibus,
Infirma nostri corporis,
Virtute firmans perpeti.

Hostem repellas longius,
Pacemque dona protinus ;
Ductore sic Te prævio
Vitemus omne noxium.

Per Te sciamus da Patrem,
Noscamus atque Filium,
Teque Utriusque Spiritum
Credamus omni tempore.

Gloria Patri Domino,
Natoque Qui a mortuis
Surrexit, ac Paracrito
In sæculorum sæcula.—Amen.

PREFACE.

WHEN that great man, Cardinal Baronius, wrote in the Preface to his *Annals*—‘Cum multa excerperem et notarem, suisque locis seponerem ac distribuerem; sensim ac paulatim factum est, ut magnam rerum copiam tanquam in aliquam cellam penariam una congesserim, præsertim contra Novatores nostri temporis, pro sacrarum traditionum antiquitate, ac S. Romanæ Catholicæ Ecclesiæ potestate,’ he left, in my opinion, a warning and a monument more enduring than brass, of the way in which history ought *not* to be written. The one aim and object of a Historian ought to be to tell the truth, and as far as possible, the whole truth about whatever person, or event he has undertaken to write. Such a method of writing history may not promise the most brilliant results, but of its utility it may be hoped there will scarcely be a question, least of all in an age when, whatever be its faults, there does seem to be a very honest and earnest desire to have the truth upon all subjects set before it, whatever the truth may be.

And for persons, however gigantic their learning, however lofty their genius, to write history as Baronius honestly professed to write it, that is to say, as partizans for one side, is only to provoke replies in a corresponding spirit from partizans of the other side. And thus the great mass of mankind, who have no wish to take a party view at all, are compelled, either to regard both sides with indifference or suspicion, or else, against their will, to become partizans of one side or the other.

The great work of the Roman Catholic Baronius was the direct result of an almost equally great Protestant work, that of

the Magdeburg Centuriators. And so long as history continues to be written thus, there is no way in which the ordinary reader can learn the truth about the Primitive Church, except by undertaking what would, of itself, be a labour of years, namely to read and compare the Annals of Baronius with the Magdeburg Centuriators, and to strike as well as may be a balance between them. It cannot be wondered at that few persons in this busy age care to embark in such an enterprise.

The conviction that this is the case, and the belief that there is an immense number of persons, who look upon the history of the Primitive Catholic Church of the Lord Jesus Christ as the most interesting of all subjects upon which the mind of man can be engaged, have led me to endeavour to write the Annals of its earliest period, subsequent to the Apostolic Age, with no other aim or object in view, than simply to tell the truth, as the truth has presented itself to me, without a thought, either of upholding, or putting down any section of those countless millions who lay claim to the Christian name, and who believe that they have a share in the most noble and the most precious of all the possessions of the family of Adam, the common heritage of the religion of Christ.

To me it seems that there has been enough of wrangling, enough of disputing. Henceforth, cannot Christians learn to be one in the love of the One Father, and of His One Only Begotten Son, and the One Eternal Spirit of grace and truth?

When I began to write the History of the early Primitive Church, I had, as I have said, no other object in view than, in as simple and straightforward a manner as I could, to tell the truth. It was after I had begun to write, that the idea dawned upon me, by little and little, becoming at length like a fair, luminous orb of charity, that this very truth about the Primitive Church was itself, not merely the best, but the only true Eirenicon.

And I saw that that Eirenicon, which the Divine Lord of love would bless, would not be that which appealed only to

Episcopal Churches, or those possessing what is termed ‘Apostolical succession’ through bishops, and which left other Christian Communities out in the cold shade of neglect, but that Eirenicon, which was addressed, with an equal love, to all who made profession of love to a common Lord, the Saviour of a sinful race, the Son of God and the Son of Man.

The time is surely fast approaching when it will be universally acknowledged, that preference for one form, or method of the external organization of Christianity above another, cannot be accepted as the measure of men’s love for a personal Christ.

St. John’s test of heresy and of orthodoxy must be the only one in these the latter days, as it certainly was in the first ages. ‘Hereby know we the Spirit of God; every spirit that confesseth that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh is of God: and every spirit that confesseth not that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh is not of God: and this is that spirit of Antichrist whereof ye have heard that it should come.’¹ Few things in history have shocked me more than to find St. Cyprian, wresting, unconsciously, I would hope and believe, such passages of holy Scripture as this, in order to put down his opponents, Novatian and Felicissimus, and such as they, who believed that Jesus Christ had come in the flesh, quite as firmly as he did himself.²

And it has been this narrowness of heart and eye, engendered

¹ 1 John iv. 2, 3.

² ‘Item beatus Joannes Apostolus, nec ipse ullam haresim, aut schisma discrevit, aut aliquos speciatim, separe posuit, sed universos, qui de ecclesia exissent, quique contra ecclesiam facerent, Antichristos appellavit, dicens, audistis quia Antichristus venit, nunc autem antichristi multi facti sunt; unde cognoscimus quia novissima hora est. Ex nobis exierunt, sed non fuerunt ex nobis. Si enim fuissent ex nobis, mansissent utique nobis.’ Epist. 69. Magno filio. I call this an awful wresting of Scripture on the part of St. Cyprian. He utterly ignores what St. John lays down over and over again, in such clear language, that no one need mistake his meaning, what *he* looked upon as the only mark of antichristian teachers and teaching, a denial of the Incarnation.

of the heat of passion and controversy, which has wrought the awful mischief of dividing the one army of the Lord of Hosts into hostile camps. Christians seem to have laid down their arms against the devil and sin to take them up, and use them against each other.

But the thought will recur—shall it, need it be always thus?

And the more we reflect, the more clearly perhaps shall we discern that history, or rather the way in which history, and especially the history of the Church has been written, has much of the evil to answer for.

Men read and write history, as Roman Catholics, as Protestants, as Anglicans. And so long as they *wish* to do so, it is certain that they will find Roman Catholicism, Protestantism, Anglicanism in the Annals of the Primitive Church. And if this spirit were universal, or if it were certain to last until the consummation of all things, it would be useless for me to attempt to write history. I should find no readers.

But it is the firm conviction that a different spirit is beginning to prevail, which renders me hopeful of a pleasanter fate. Judging as well as one can by the signs of the times, there does seem to be a body of earnest-minded Christians, numerically large already, and ever increasing their ranks, who love, and believe in, and care for, not wholly, nor primarily, any outward form in which Christianity may, for a time, have been presented to the eyes of men; but for the Christian religion itself, in its adaptability to the spiritual and moral wants of the whole human race. No lower view than this will satisfy those who have learnt to believe that the religion of Christ is, above every thing else, and before every thing else, a religion of perfect love.

And it seems to me that there are men of all schools and parties who are ready to encourage with their sympathy the historian who desires to write in such a spirit the history of the Early Church.

As a matter of fact, I find such feelings and views as those

which I am about to describe very prevalent amongst that body of men to which I have the honour to belong, the inferior clergy, as they are called, of the Anglican Church. They say, in effect, something of this kind. 'We have all been brought up to look upon the Anglican Church as a kind of continuation of the Primitive Church in modern times, and, therefore, the Primitive Church itself as Anglicanism upon an extended scale. We have all our lives been reading works and histories written by those who have looked at the Early Church through Roman Catholic, Anglican, or Protestant spectacles. What we now desire is, that some one, with fairly competent learning, would look at it, not through any spectacles at all, but with his own natural eyesight, and give us the result of his experience.'

A student of the Fathers I had been almost all my life, but had always read them with a ready-made apparatus of Anglican views and theories at hand to interpret them, until, a few years ago, I resolved to review the whole of Ante-Nicene Literature, divesting myself, as far as I could, of all preconceived opinions. This history is the result of that review. I am not surprised that under the former system, I always, or nearly always found Anglicanism in the Fathers: nor that I have since discovered comparatively little of it, but a very great deal of what is not Anglicanism.

I incline more and more to believe that readers may find in the Fathers what they look for: and truism as it sounds, albeit slightly paradoxical, the only way to learn what the Fathers do say, is to read them without looking for anything at all.

All things at the present day seem to betoken, as rapidly approaching, one of those great modifications of external Christianity of which there have been only two, or three at the most, in the long course of 1,800 years.

A deluge it will be: and he would be more than prophet, who should be able to foretell all that will emerge when the waters subside.

But though this is far beyond all human ken, of one thing

we may feel assured, that Christianity as it is, in its own true vital essence, will come forth all the fairer, all the purer.

And all this gathering of the clouds, this muttering of the storm, this flashing of the distant lightning, this pealing of the distant thunder, distant as yet, but closing in with an ever narrowing circle; and above all that mysterious tendency, or whatever it be, which Scripture seems to indicate when it speaks of ‘the Foundations being cast down,’ and ‘the Powers that are in heaven being shaken,’ all these seem to intimate that a breathing time is being mercifully granted to the men of this generation, to set the house of the Visible Church in order.

For myself, I can see no way to do this, but the cultivation of the spirit of perfect love amongst all who name the Name of Christ, love in its twofold form of affection and charity.

And I firmly believe, that this mutual love and charity will be greatly promoted by a study of the records of the Primitive Church, if only they are studied in a gentle spirit; and with a little attention to what is fair deduction, and honest criticism.

To give a single example of what I mean. Few stories have been more frequently repeated in modern days than that of St. John leaping out of a bath, into which the heretic Kerinthus had previously entered.

When this story is examined, it will be found to be told with so many discrepancies as to be *historically* worthless. But to let that pass, and to treat it as an undoubted fact, what is to be complained of is this, that it should be used by so many in the present day in an unfair and unwarrantable manner. If St. John did leap out of a bath in which Kerinthus was, it was because Kerinthus denied that ‘Jesus Christ was come in the flesh,’ it was because he rejected the eternal truth, that ‘the Holy Ghost came upon Mary, and the power of the Highest overshadowed her, and therefore that Holy Thing which was born of her was called the Son of God.’ And it was *not* because Kerinthus did not accept the doctrines of Apostolical Succession, or Baptismal Regeneration, or because, like Tertullian, he

might have had a view of his own about the expediency of deferring Baptism until children came to years of discretion, or because he might have had peculiar theories about the condition of souls after death, like Clement of Alexandria, or thought, like Origen, that we may eat the flesh of Peter or Paul, in the same sense that we eat the Flesh of Christ, that is to say by reading and meditation upon their sayings,¹ or for any such things as these.

So that what we have to deprecate is, that persons should apply their stores of knowledge, derived from reading the records of the Early Church, to cases and persons in ancient or modern times, upon which they have no bearing whatsoever. This is a practice which St. Cyprian began, or at least greatly promoted. It is time now, after a trial of it for 1,600 years, to give it up. Abuse never converted anyone.

In the absence of proof to the contrary, it surely ought to be conceded that our opponents are seekers after the Truth, and that they are just as earnest, and just as sincere in the search as we are ourselves.

Time was, in early manhood, when I thought that those who differed from me *would* not see. Middle age takes from us many things, but there is one thing which it does give us, that is if we will accept the gift, power to perceive that when people oppose us, it is not that they *will not*, but that they *do not* see. How easy a lesson in all appearance. How hardly, perhaps how seldom learned.

And if we could fully learn this, if we could fully realize that whilst the Truth is one, yet that the aspects in which Truth presents herself are very multiform, we should cease to be anxious to make converts to any particular aspect in which the Truth may have presented herself to ourselves.

Whilst our zeal for making men Christians, that is, like Christ, as His glorious character has been revealed to us, would

¹ Origen. Hom. in Levit. vii. 5.

be in nowise diminished, we should not be worried, or anxious as to the *form* in which He presented Himself to them. We should see a practical application in our own day and generation of the marvel related by Origen, that Christ, though retaining His own form, yet appeared to those who beheld Him, ‘in the days of His flesh,’ in divers forms: or that other marvel handed down by Arnobius, that Christ, whilst uttering only the one language of Judæa, yet seemed to speak to every one who heard him, each in their own mother tongue.¹

We may believe these marvels, or disbelieve them, as we please. That is of little moment. But what they seem to teach, that the Face of Christ is ever being manifested to all men through all the world, each according to the craving of their souls for a Divine Deliverer, and that the Voice of Christ is ever sounding on through the ages, and speaking to the hearts of all, each according to their own sorrows and their own wants, this is indeed a truth. To miss of this were to miss of a source of infinite satisfaction, to miss of a fount of endless comfort.

Truths like this we may hope will be found to have survived in the hearts of men, when the waters of the coming Deluge shall have again subsided.

And in the mean while, what can be a better training for the mind and heart of Christians, than the study of the records of the Primitive Catholic Church: of the Church as she was, before the æra of Constantine made her less, so to say, a Catholic Church, and more a grand ecclesiastical system?

To all Christians I would say emphatically, the study of the Primitive Church is for all. It has been too hastily assumed that Protestants, and Nonconformists, as they are called, would

¹ The language of Arnobius is very beautiful. ‘Unus, sc. Christus, fuit e nobis, qui cum unam emitteret vocem, ab diversis populis et dissona oratione loquentibus familiaribus verborum sonis, et suo cuique utens existimabatur eloquio?’ *Advers. Nationes*, Lib. i. c. 46.

not have had standing ground in the Primitive Church. I thought so once. Deeper reading and reflection have convinced me of the contrary. The advice I would give to every one is what I have followed myself. Study the history of the Primitive Church for yourself. And though I do not say you will find a reproduction there of your own peculiar denomination, or ecclesiastical organization, yet of this I am quite sure, you will not find a close, or absolute reproduction of any other modern system whatsoever. If you do not find Calvinism, or Lutheranism, or Independency in the Primitive Church, neither also will you find any exclusive Anglicanism, or exclusive Romanism.¹ But you will find a very great deal of what is infinitely better—the love and the spirit of Jesus Christ. You will find that the Primitive Church is *sui generis*: in one word, that she is herself, and not something else. And when the history of the Church can be read in this light, it will no longer be necessary to look upon it as a mere collection of facts, to be submitted to the criticism of partizans.

It is to be feared that the Annals of the Primitive Church have been, for the most part, regarded in the light of such a collection of facts—a certain number of which look to be in favour of a particular theory, whilst another certain number of them look as though they were opposed to it. Then the partizan historian, or theologian comes forward, and executes his work, by, on the one hand, dressing up all the facts which appear to be

¹ Whilst this work has been passing through the press, my attention has been directed to an able article in the current number of the 'Edinburgh Review,' in which the writer maintains that to suppose there was some peculiar, or exclusive external organization of the Primitive Church, exactly corresponding to any existing modern form of Church government, is not only unhistorical, but is directly at variance with historical facts, to take them as a whole. Of the truth of this, I believe the reader of the following pages will find reiterated and overwhelming evidence. 'Edinburgh Review,' Jan. 1873, 'Church and Dissent,' pp. 201, 202.

in favour of his theory in the most attractive manner, and on the other hand, explaining away, to the best of his ability, the other class of facts which appear to militate against his theory.

And it is well when this explaining away process stops there. The mass of mankind, and therefore the mass of authors, may be believed to be honest. But where men's prejudices are strongly engaged on a particular side, the temptations are so great, that there will be always some, who will step beyond the recognized boundaries, which the world of letters has consented to grant to 'explaining away,' and will pass on to absolute falsification.

This has unfortunately been the case in the great question of Church government. And the attention of Scholars should be earnestly directed to those falsifications which have been made in the interests of Episcopacy.

Though indeed this is a question not merely for Scholars, or for the learned, since it is the right of all who profess and call themselves Christians to have the facts of the History of that Catholic Church to which they really belong, set before them as they are, without fear and without favour, apart from prejudice and free from dissimulation.

As a humble effort in this direction, to write the history of the earliest period of the Primitive Ante-Nicene Church, in a manner, examples of which are not too abundant, this work is presented by the Author as an Eirenicon to his fellow Christians throughout the world. '*Securus judicet orbis terrarum.*'

He has not the vanity to suppose that it is impossible to overthrow any, or even all the conclusions at which he has arrived, and which are stated in this work. But he has, at least, this satisfaction, that they can only be overthrown by those who are willing to undertake a similar labour to that which has resulted in putting them forward—an examination of the whole of Ante-Nicene Christian Literature, in the original documents in which it has been preserved.

In conclusion, speaking as only I have a right to speak, for myself, it appears to me that there is but one only thing, which comes forth from the fierce crucible of modern criticism, absolutely intact, as gold purified seven times in the fire—and that is, the true, and perfect, and eternal Divinity of Jesus Christ. I mean that that wondrous and mysterious Being, Who first appeared, very nearly 1900 years ago, on the banks of the Jordan, Who was born as all other sons and daughters of men are born, save that His Mother was a spotless Virgin, Who was an hungred and athirst, wearied and wayworn, as He travelled over the hills and valleys of Palestine, beneath the burning rays of an Eastern sun, Who wept, just as we weep, when we lose those we love, Who groaned and agonized in the garden of Gethsemane, Whose warm, red, human blood welled forth like any other blood of mortal man, when cruel wounds were made in His hands and feet, that He, this Christ, Who tested by every test which can be applied to man, except sin, was very man, that He was also very God, God, according to every test which we apply to the Deity—God, because He was from all eternity, God, because by Him all worlds were made. And so long as every fibre of the heart of every true Christian throbs and quivers at the thought of this Mystery of mysteries, this Truth of truths, it is hard indeed to understand why, or how anything else can ever divide them.

Surely, if the salt have not wholly lost its savour, some one in authority, some bishop, or prelate will at length arise, and be large-hearted enough to say to his separated brethren of the Family of God—‘There has been enough of strife, enough of division. Henceforth let us be one in Christ. We do not ask for your submission, as we have done in the weary ages of controversy that are past. We ask for nothing, we wish for nothing save your unfeigned love. Your Ministers, we regard as Ministers of Christ in accordance with their work for Him, though you may not call them by our names; and in you we gladly

recognize the work and the fruits of the Spirit of grace, in just as full measure as we behold them amongst ourselves.'

When this most joyful day of days shall come, then shall the Family of God be one on earth, even as it is one in heaven: and then shall our Saviour's Prayer, for the fulfilment of which all loving hearts have ever been sighing, since the spirit of disunion parted them asunder, have its blessed accomplishment — 'That they all may be one.'

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THE CATHOLIC CHURCH

OF

JESUS CHRIST.

CHAPTER I.

HISTORY OF CLEMENS ROMANUS.

ST. CLEMENT of Rome may be looked upon as a chief link connecting the apostolic with the isapostolic and the sub-apostolic Church. He had intimate relations with all three. The disciple and friend and companion of St. Peter and St. Paul, and employed and trusted by them in ecclesiastical matters, we can well believe that he would carry the spirit at least of their system into the guidance of the Church after their departure. He is called an Apostle by his namesake of Alexandria, showing the usage of the term as late as the end of the second century.¹ An account of St. Clement may be divided into three parts: 1. His authentic history. 2. His literary remains. 3. The legends which in very early times grew up in connection with his name.

It is probably he of whom St. Paul speaks as 'his fellow-labourer, whose name was in the Book of Life.'²

¹ Ναὶ μὲν ἐν τῇ πρὸς Κορινθίους ἐπιστολῇ ὁ Ἀπόστολος Κλήμης.
Strom. i. iv. c. 17.

² Phil. iv. 3.

This mention of Clement occurs in an epistle which it is likely enough was written, according to the common idea, from Rome about the year 64. It certainly was composed not long before St. Paul's death. It may be presumed that he first became acquainted with Clement either at Philippi, or else in that neighbourhood. Clement could scarcely have been a very prominent person in the Roman Church when St. Paul addressed an epistle to it, a few years previously, or his name would have occurred in the long list of salutations. His name is undoubtedly Latin, but some have thought from an expression in his first Epistle that he was of Jewish origin. But it is not necessary to understand the passage in question in a literal sense. It was not unusual with the early Christians to speak of themselves as children of Abraham and the patriarchs, on the principle laid down by St. Paul in the second chapter of the Epistle to the Romans, and elsewhere. When they wished to intimate that they were Jews by birth, they added 'according to the flesh,' or some similar expression.

All Christian antiquity bears witness to the fact that St. Clement was the first, or one of the first bishops of Rome. But the meaning of this statement, and what is implied by it, is very doubtful indeed. Tertullian says simply, 'As the Church of the Smyrnæans relates that Polycarp was placed there by John, so in like manner the Church of the Romans relates that Clement was ordained by Peter.' Placed or appointed bishop, and ordained bishop, are here evidently used by Tertullian as synonymous expressions.¹

¹ The passage in Tertullian is given in full. If carefully examined, it will be seen that it gives no countenance to the later theory of the Episcopate being a distinct *Order*, as opposed to rank or office. 'Ceterum si qua audent interserere se atati apostolicæ, ut ideo videantur ab

Protestant and Anglican writers have been alive to the fact of the uncertainty of the statements of early authorities as to who was the first bishop of Rome, but they do not seem to have realised the full significance of this uncertainty. They have applied to the case of these primitive bishops rules and canons which were the growth of a subsequent generation—such, for instance, as that there could be but one bishop in one city, even though that city were Rome itself, with the population of a province; or again, that any one having been made bishop of a particular see was wedded to that Church as a husband to a bride, and must not leave it to give place to any other. But what we know of St. Clement's history shows that we must not look for such ideas in the first century. To give an instance of the second of these mistakes in the case of another of the Apostolic Fathers—St. Timothy. A comparison of the sequence of St. Paul's labours¹ shows very

Apostolis traditæ, quia sub Apostolis fuerunt, possumus dicere—edant ergo origines ecclesiarum suarum, evolvant ordinem episcoporum suorum ita per successiones ab initio decurrentem, ut primus ille episcopus, aliquem ex Apostolis, vel apostolicis viris, qui tamen cum Apostolis perseveraverit, habuerit auctorem et antecessorem. Hoc enim modo Ecclesiæ Apostolicæ census suos deferunt: sicut Smyrnæorum ecclesia Polycarpum ab Joanne conlocatum refert: sicut Romanorum, Clementem a Petro ordinatum itidem.'—De Præscrip. Hæret. p. 243. This, it will be seen hereafter, leaves untouched the question of *Order*, strictly so called.

¹ St. Paul first visited Ephesus, and laid the foundation of its Church A.D. 51, or, as some think, in 53. His stay upon this occasion was very brief; but he returned in the year following, when he remained three years (Acts xx. 31), leaving Ephesus about A.D. 55. During the twelve years which elapsed before his martyrdom, Ephesus ought, according to later theories of Church government, to have had one permanently residing bishop; but so far is this from being the case that St. Timothy, who in after times was called the First Bishop of Ephesus, was only occasionally in that city, and was chiefly employed in attending upon St. Paul, or in evangelistic labours in various places. (See 1 Cor.

plainly one of two things—either that after having founded the great Ephesine Church, the apostle at his departure did not think it necessary to leave any one in particular to be bishop of the diocese ; or else, if it be held that St. Timothy was consecrated first bishop of Ephesus, then we must suppose that St. Paul, instead of letting him remain to superintend the infant Church, took him about with himself, or employed him in missionary labours which entailed an absence of years from his diocese. Either supposition is inconsistent with diocesan episcopacy.

Tertullian says, as we have seen, that ‘Clement was ordained bishop of the Romans by St. Peter.’ That means, looking at the matter according to the views prevalent in Tertullian’s time, that St. Clement was the first bishop of the Church and See of Rome.¹ When, in the next place, we turn to Eusebius, we find him stating unequivocally that Linus was the first bishop of Rome. ‘After the

xvi. 10 ; Rom. xv. 21. But cf. especially 2 Cor. i. 19, Phil. ii. 19, and 1 Thess. ii. 3, with 1 Tim. i. 3.) A careful comparison of all these passages will show that St. Timothy stood in much the same relation to the Churches of Corinth, Philippi, and Thessaly that he bore to the Church of Ephesus. It is a groundless assertion that the directions given in 1 Tim. iii., &c., with reference to ordinations, refer exclusively to their exercise at Ephesus. They are general precepts, applicable to all places.

¹ Alban Butler in his *Life of St. Clement* (November 23rd) seems greatly puzzled by this passage of Tertullian :—‘Tertullian tells us that St. Peter ordained him bishop, by which some understand that he made him a bishop of nations, to preach the Gospel in many countries ; others, with Epiphanius, that he made him his vicar at Rome, with an episcopal character, to govern that Church during his absence in his frequent missions. Others suppose he might at first be made bishop of the Jewish Church in that city.’ Anyone who will take the trouble of referring to what Tertullian actually did say, will see that people have given themselves the trouble of all these suppositions, because, like good Alban Butler, they were hampered with a theory, and, to suit it, quietly ignored the important fact that St. Clement was appointed *Bishop of the Romans*.

martyrdom of Peter and Paul, Linus first obtains the bishopric of the Church of the Romans.¹ We might suppose that these words would admit of some other explanation but for the following reasons:—1. Eusebius says shortly afterwards, ‘Linus, of whom Paul makes mention as having been his companion at Rome, in his Second Epistle to Timothy, was certainly, after Peter, the first bishop of the Church of the Romans.’² No manipulation can alter the meaning of these words. They must exclude the idea of St. Clement’s being the *first* bishop. 2. Eusebius took the best authority he could find for the succession of the bishops of Rome. He relied upon Irenæus, who was well acquainted with Roman affairs; and citing his book against heresies, he says,³ ‘After the blessed Apostles had founded and built the Church of Rome, they committed to Linus the ministry of its episcopate. His successor was Anacletus: after him, in the third place from the Apostles, Clement obtains the episcopate.’ And yet again, in two other places, Eusebius gives the same order of succession, with the exact dates of their pontificates.⁴ It is this introduction of Anacletus as succeeding Linus, followed himself by Clement, added to the indisputable fact that Clement was consecrated bishop by St. Peter, which effectually disposes of the imaginary theory that St. Clement was the bishop of the Jewish portion of the Church of Rome. If he were, who became their bishop when Clement himself succeeded Anacletus? But this idea is such a pure figment of the imagination that it scarcely deserves mention.

If, on the other hand, we recognise the primitive

¹ H. E. iii. 2.

² *Ibid.* iii. 4.

³ Eus. v. 6; St. Iren. iii. 3. See also Dr. Dollinger’s *First Age of the Church*, who shows at length that Irenæus and Eusebius are the most reliable authorities for the succession of the early bishops of Rome.

⁴ H. E. iii. 13 and 15.

character of Episcopacy, everything becomes clear and intelligible. Eusebius and Tertullian, and the catalogues of the early bishops, are consistent with themselves, and concordant with one another. St. Peter ordained at Rome a number of presbyter-bishops, as St. Paul did at Ephesus, indeed wherever he planted the Gospel.¹ These bishops became the original Presbyteral College of Rome, and amongst them was St. Clement. But nearly every College of Presbyters had a chairman, or president,² either nominated by the apostolic founder of the Church, or else elected by the presbyters themselves. St. Clement seems to have been appointed the first president of the Roman College by St. Peter. This accounts for the tradition which it is so difficult to explain in any other way, that Clement was the first bishop of Rome. After a time, St. Clement appears to have gone away from Rome on some evangelistic mission, and then another presbyter was appointed to supply his place of president.³ That president, antiquity tells us, was Linus, who was appointed to the office by St. Peter and St. Paul. After the death of Linus, Ana-

¹ Acts xiv. 23. 'Χειροτονήσαντες δὲ αὐτοῖς πρεσβυτέρους κατ' ἐκκλησίαν.' This seems to describe St. Paul's universal practice, wherever he founded or visited a Christian Church. St. Paul does not appear to have conformed in the matter of ecclesiastical government to the model of the Church of Jerusalem so nearly as some of the other Apostles. He took in this, as in so many other ways, a perfectly independent line.

² The Corinthian Church, and a few others, seem to have had no, even temporary, president.

³ There is a faint echo from those far-off ages that Clement retired from his presidential chair for the sake of peace. 'Τίς οὖν ἐν ὑμῖν γενναῖος, τίς εὐσπλαγχνος, τίς πεπληροφορημένος ἀγαπῆς; Εἰπάτω· εἰ δὲ ἐμὲ στάσις, καὶ ἔρις, καὶ σχίσματα, ἐκχωρῶ, ἄπειμι, οὗ ἔαν βούλησθε, καὶ ποιῶ τὰ προστασσόμενα ὑπὸ τοῦ πλήθους· μόνον τὸ ποιῶναι τοῦ Χριστοῦ εἰρηνεύειν μετὰ τῶν καθεσταμένων πρεσβυτέρων' (Ep. I. ad Cor. c. 54). Epiphanius says this proposed course was the one which St. Clement himself had taken.—Hær. xxvii. 6.

cletus was chosen by the presbyters of Rome to supply his place, St. Clement being passed over. At last, after the death of Anacletus, Clement is once more elected to fill the vacant chair, in which he had been originally, though temporarily, placed by St. Peter.

Everything now becomes clear, harmonious, and consistent in the history of the early Roman Church and her first bishops. But take other and comparatively modern theories of diocesan episcopacy, that the episcopate is an originally distinct order of the Christian ministry, and we have these three stubborn facts to twist into shape, or explain away:—1. That St. Clement, after having been consecrated bishop of Rome, goes away and leaves his widowed Church for years without a chief pastor. 2. That Linus and Anacletus were nothing better than intruders into a see which really belonged to another. They are made, in fact, to have been wolves, not shepherds—the first antipopes, as we may say. 3. Lastly, and strangest of all, when Linus dies, the Church of Rome and its presbyters, who had, according to the diocesan theory, a bishop ready to their hands, consecrated by St. Peter himself, actually pass him over, and elect the unknown Anacletus; and, it is to be supposed, get him by some means ordained a bishop; we may imagine perhaps, by bishop Clement himself. This would be a touching instance of humility and self-abnegation on the part of the latter, if only there were the slightest foundation for it in point of fact.

We shall see in the early history of the Church of Alexandria that its constitution was similar to that of the primitive Church of Rome. The only difference was, that the presidents of Rome grew much more rapidly than those of Alexandria into diocesan bishops. The next stage of growth was the development of the bishops of the great cities into primates or metropolitans; and of these metro-

politans, three—the primates of Rome, Alexandria, and Antioch—ascended to the majestic height of a patriarchal throne.

The bishops of Jerusalem were only patriarchs by courtesy, and the erection of Constantinople into a patriarchate was a mere political intrigue. At least, it was certainly not the result of spontaneous growth; nor was it brought about by the unbiassed action of the Catholic Church herself.¹

¹ A curious and instructive proof of the way in which the episcopate has gradually encroached upon the originally co-equal rights of the presbyterate may be found in a passage of St. Chrysostom (Hom. xi. in 1st Epist. ad Tim.). ‘St. Paul,’ he says, ‘discoursing of bishops, and having described their character, and the qualities which they ought to possess, and having passed over the order of presbyters, proceeds to that of deacons. The reason of that omission was, that between bishops and presbyters there was no great difference. Both had undertaken the office of teachers and *presidents* in the Church (*προστασίαν τῇ ἐκκλησίᾳ*), and what he has said concerning bishops is applicable to presbyters. For they are *only* superior in having the power of ordination (*τῇ γὰρ χειροτονίᾳ μόνῃ ὑπερβεβήκασι*), and *seem to have no other advantage over presbyters.*’

This passage is important in many ways:—1. It shows that the strong things which St. Chrysostom says of the authority of priests in his *De Sacerdotio* may really be understood of presbyters, and not, as some have tried to show, of bishops only. 2. That when much earlier writers, as Justin M., speak of the president (*προεστώς*) of a Christian Church, this title may be understood of a presbyter just as well as of a bishop, thus cutting away one very favourite argument from under the feet of episcopacy. 3. It proves that, as late as the fifth century, one who was a saint and a patriarch himself was simply ignorant of the theory, that the *government* of the Catholic Church had been committed exclusively to the episcopal order. 4. It is evident that, at some period since the fifth century, most episcopal churches have made the innovation of confining the Sacrament of Confirmation, and the Consecration of the oil for anointing the sick, to bishops only. 5. And lastly, the fact that we can put our finger upon the very date *after* which these innovations came in, leads us to suspect another and earlier innovation, that, namely, of confining the power of ordination to bishops. This suspicion we shall find hereafter to be confirmed by overwhelming positive evidence.

The history of St. Clement of Rome raises the vitally important question of what was the nature and what were

And we shall see that the restriction grew up, probably very gradually, between the middle of the second and the beginning of the fourth century.

The negative testimony of St. Chrysostom, as to the power of presbyters to confirm, is supported by a positive statement of Clement of Alexandria: (Τίνα γὰρ ὁ πρεσβύτερος ἐπιτίθητι χεῖρα: τίνα δὲ εὐλογήσκει; οὐ τὴν γυναῖκα τὴν κεκοσμημένην, κ.τ.λ., Pæd. l. iii. c. 11, § 63.) 'Upon whom,' he says, 'does the *presbyter* lay his hand? Whom does he bless? Not the woman who is adorned with false hair; but because of this hair, he really lays his hand upon some one else's head.'

The encroachment which bishops have made by the restriction they have imposed upon the administration of the Sacrament of the Anointing of the Sick, is more notorious though scarcely more recent. Taking St. James' words in their simple obvious meaning, it is perfectly clear that he intended this rite to be exercised by all Christian priests as part of their ordinary pastoral care. 'Is any sick among you? Let him call for the presbyters of the Church; and let them pray over him, anointing him with oil in the name of the Lord.' And thus it was understood for 400 years after St. James wrote. The only doubt which appears to have been raised was, whether, seeing St. James mentions presbyters only, it were lawful for bishops to confer this anointing. This is the question proposed by Decentius, bishop of Eugubium. Pope Innocent I. Innocent replied that it was lawful, on the ground that whatever a priest could do, a bishop could do, because 'the episcopate is the crown of the priesthood.'¹ St. Thomas

¹ Epist. ad Decent. script. circa 416. Few passages in antiquity are more frequently referred to by modern writers than this epistle, but as the original Latin is scarcely ever quoted, it is here given. After quoting St. James' Epist., Innocent proceeds:—'Quod non est dubium de fidelibus egrotantibus accipi vel intelligi debere: qui sancto oleo perungi possunt quod ab episcopo confectum, non solum sacerdotibus, sed omnibus uti Christianis licet in sua aut in suorum necessitate ungendum. Ceterum illud superfluum videmus adjectum, ut de episcopo ambigatur, quod presbyteris licere non dubium est. Nam ideo presbyteris dictum est, quia episcopi occupationibus aliis impediti ad omnes languidos ire non possunt. Ceterum si episcopus aut potest, aut dignum ducit aliquem a se visitandum et benedicere aut tangere chrismate sine cunctatione potest, cujus est ipsum chrisma conficere.'—Corpus Juris Canonici.

Pope Innocent, in this ruling of his, goes counter to the practice of both the Eastern and the Western Church. He differs from the East in restricting the consecration of the oil for the sick, as he seems to do, to a bishop; he differs from the whole West in not restricting the use of this oil, after consecration, to presbyters, but extending it to any layman who may have sick friends, and desires to

the limits of apostolic and primitive episcopacy. In pursuing the enquiry, we shall be materially aided by two

Aquinas labours hard to show why, for mystical reasons, 'in all sacraments which require consecrated matter, this matter is first consecrated by the bishop for subsequent use by the priest, in order that it may be manifested that the sacerdotal power is derived from the episcopal, according to that Psalm: "It is like the precious ointment upon the head, that ran down upon the beard, even Aaron's beard, that went down to the skirts of his clothing."'¹

Upon this reasoning, it is only necessary to observe that it was more calculated to convince in St. Thomas' age than it would be in ours.

In respect to this holy rite, the Eastern Church has been more faithful to apostolic injunctions and primitive usage than her Western sister. Throughout the East, priests may still bless the oil, and anoint the sick as St. James bids them, without any episcopal intervention whatsoever.²

The Ethiopic rite still bears witness in our own day to the ancient practice of presbyteral Confirmation. In the Ethiopian Church Confirmation ordinarily follows Baptism. It is entitled 'the Order of Mysteries or of the Administration of the Sacrament of Confirmation.' The rite consists of its two apostolically ordained parts—the holy anointing, and the laying on of hands, of which the English Church has only retained the latter, in this respect departing from the practice of every other portion of the Catholic Church from the beginning throughout the world. In the Ethiopic rite, the opening rubric speaks of the prayers said by the priest, when he lays his hands upon those who are to be confirmed. The priest anoints the forehead and other parts of the catechumens with balsam. Then he lays his hand upon them and says—'May ye be blessed with the blessing of the heavenly angels. Our Lord Jesus Christ bless you.' Then signing them with the sign of the cross, he adds—'Receive ye the Holy Ghost, through the power of God the Father, through the power of His Son Jesus Christ, and through the power of the Holy Ghost; and be ye elect and clean vessels of our Lord Jesus Christ, to Whom is glory with the Father and the Holy Ghost, for ever and ever. Amen.'³

anoint them. Altogether this may be looked upon as one of those numerous passages which it is hard, if not impossible, to reconcile with the theory of papal infallibility.

¹ Ps. cxxxiii. 2. St. Tho. Aq., *Summ. Theol. Quæst.*, 29, De Essentia et Institutione Ex. Unctionis.

² Neale's *Intr. Hist. of the H. East. Church*, p. 1035.

³ *Bibliotheca Patrum*, ed. Paris, tom. vii.

passages of Tertullian—passages which at first sight might appear inconsistent with each other, but which a candid consideration of facts apart from theories will bring into perfect harmony. The first passage is one much relied upon by the maintainers of the episcopate being a distinct order. They very naturally say that it was written when the great African was in a state of orthodoxy. He had been declaring the doctrine of the Church with regard to baptism, and he proceeds to speak of the minister of the sacrament as follows:¹ ‘The chief priest—that is to say, the bishop—has the right of giving baptism. After him presbyters and deacons; but not without the authority of the bishop, on account of the honour due to the Church; for if that be preserved, peace is preserved. Otherwise, even laymen have the right; for that which is equally received can be equally given. Unless bishops, or priests, or deacons are nigh, even catechumens are invited. The word of the Lord ought not to be hidden by anyone. In like

¹ *De Baptismo*, p. 263. I have translated as fairly as I can; but the only safe way to escape animadversion is to give the original. Scholars will see that the Latin text often admits of several translations. ‘Dandi quidem, sc. baptismum, habet jus summus sacerdos, qui est episcopus, dehinc presbyteri et diaconi: non tamen sine episcopi auctoritate, propter ecclesiæ honorem, quo salvo, salva pax est. Alioquin laicis jus est. Quod enim ex æquo accipitur, ex æquo dari potest. Nisi episcopi jam, aut presbyteri, aut diaconi vocantur, discentes. Domini sermo non debet abscondi ab ullo. Proinde et baptismus æque Dei census, ab omnibus exerceri potest: sed quanto magis laicis disciplina verecundiæ et modestiæ incumbit? Cum ea majoribus competant, ne sibi adsumant dicatum episcopis officium episcopatus. Æmulatio schismatum mater est. Omnia licere dixit sanctissimus apostolus, sed non omnia expedire. Sufficiat scilicet, in necessitatibus utaris, sicubi aut loci, aut temporis, aut personæ conditio compellit. Tunc enim constantia succurrentis excipitur, cum urget circumstantia periclitantis. Quoniam reus erit perditionis hominis, si supersederit præstare quod libere potuit.’

manner, baptism also, which is equally, as it were, God's money, may be used by all. But though this be so, does it not make the rule of reverence and modesty all the more incumbent on the laity? Since those offices belong to their superiors, let them not take upon themselves the office of a bishop, which has been confined to bishops. Emulation is the mother of schisms. The most holy apostle has said that "all things are lawful, but not all things expedient." Let it be sufficient to use your privilege in cases of necessity, whether of place, or time, or person; for then is the firmness of him that succours acceptable, when the danger of him that is in peril is imminent; for he will be guilty of a fellow-creature's ruin, who shall neglect to bestow what he might freely give.'

Wise and pregnant words indeed. And never will the Catholic Church of to-day have peace from her miseries and distractions until, casting off the trammels and traditions of seventeen centuries which have been wound around her, she can stand upright in that spiritual freedom which she possessed when Tertullian could write what has been quoted, and not, on this account at least, be condemned for heresy.¹ If we now turn to a writing of Tertullian, to which the stigma of Montanism is usually affixed,² we shall find nothing more than a development of the same great principle which underlies the argument in the '*De Baptismo*'—the principle that all spiritual power is lodged in the Catholic Church, *as a whole*; that the whole body is a kingdom of priests; that all official power is derived *from* them, in cases of necessity flows *back to* them, and in the last resort is resumable *by* them. What Tertullian

¹ The *De Baptismo* seems to be generally allowed to be pre-Montanist.

² *De Exhort. Cast.* p. 668.

says in this latter treatise is this. He is arguing against second marriages even in the case of laymen. That priests should marry once only, was one of those rules of the Catholic Church which, in Tertullian's time, was looked upon by everybody as a matter of course, because of Divine obligation from apostolic times. Tertullian uses this universally conceded principle, as affecting priests, to press home a similar discipline upon the laity. 'But for Christ was reserved—as in other things so also in this, namely, single marriages—the fulfilling of the law. Amongst us, therefore, it is fully and expressly prescribed, that they who are chosen into the priestly order must be married only once. So entirely is this the case that I have known priests to be degraded on account of a second marriage. But you will say, "the very fact of priests being excepted shows that it is lawful for others." Foolish indeed shall we be, if we imagine that what is not lawful for priests is lawful for laymen. Are not we laymen priests, do you say? It is written, "He hath made us a kingdom also and priests to God and His Father." The authority of the Church has constituted the difference between those in orders and the people at large, and an honourable office has been made holy by the consession of orders. Thus, therefore, where there is not the consession of the ecclesiastical order, thou offerest the Eucharist, thou baptizest, thou thyself art a priest to thyself.¹ But where three are, though they be

¹ The Sacrament of Baptism may still be given by a layman, even in the Church of England, though an attempt, all but successful, was made in the seventeenth century to restrict its administration to the clergy only. The Sacrament of Marriage was valid without sacerdotal intervention in the Western Church up to the Council of Trent. The Sacrament of the Unction of the Sick might be given by the laity with oil previously blessed by a bishop, in the time of Pope Innocent I. And it would not be difficult to write a treatise in proof of the position, that the essential elements of a valid Sacrament of Penance might be

laymen, there is a Church. For everyone liveth by his own faith, and there is no acceptance of persons with God.¹ If, then, thou hast the right of a priest in thyself, where there is necessity, it behoves thee to have the discipline of a priest, in case such necessity should arise. Married a second time, dost thou baptize? Dost thou offer the Eucharist? How much graver an offence is it that a twice-married layman should act as a priest, when even from priests themselves the right of exercising their office is taken away, if they marry a second time! But indulgence, you say, is granted to necessity. No necessity, the cause of which could have been avoided, affords an excuse. In short, do not be found in a second marriage, and you will not be involved in the necessity of administering that which is not lawful to one who is married twice to administer. God wills us all to be in such a condition that we may at all times and in all places be ready to take part in His sacraments. There is one God, one faith, and one discipline. So entirely is this the case, that unless laymen observe the rules which guide the Church in the choice of presbyters, how can there be any presbyters at all, since they are chosen from the laity? We have a right, therefore, to contend that a layman should abstain from a second marriage, even before he is actually com-

found outside the priestly order, down at least to a comparatively recent date. Thus have the sacerdotal rights of the laity been ever more and more restricted as time has gone on.

¹ Such words as these seem strangely dissonant from the ideas which have for the most part prevailed throughout the whole Church since Tertullian's time; and yet it was impossible entirely to eradicate them even in the Middle Ages. Witness such a rubric as the following in the Sarum Ritual:—'*Deinde communicetur infirmus, nisi prius communicatus fuerit; et nisi de vomitu et alia irreverentia probabiliter timeatur, in quo casu dicat sacerdos infirmo—Frater, in hoc casu sufficit tibi vera fides et bona voluntas: tantum crede et manducasti.*'—*Rubr. in Officio Ex. Unctionis: Usus Saris.*

manded, so long as a presbyter can be none other than a layman who has been married once and once only.¹

It will be seen at once that the force of Tertullian's words, as to the inherent priesthood of the laity, does not in the slightest degree depend upon the correctness of his theory about second marriages; on the contrary, he rests his objection to second marriages upon the acknowledged principle of the inherent priesthood of the laity. It is perfectly evident that there is here no question of pre- or post-Montanism, of orthodoxy or heterodoxy. The only question is—Can Tertullian be taken as a witness to

¹ 'Sed Christo servabatur, sicut in cæteris, ita in isto quoque legis plenitudo. Inde igitur apud nos plenius atque instructius præscribitur, unius matrimonii esse oportere qui adleguntur in ordinem sacerdotalem. Usque adeo quosdam memini digamos loco dejectos: sed dices, ergo et cæteris licet quos excipit. Vani erimus si putaverimus quod sacerdotibus non liceat laicis licere. Nonne et laici sacerdotes sumus? Scriptum est, Regnum quoque nos et sacerdotes Deo et Patri suo fecit. Differentiam inter Ordinem et Plebem constituit Ecclesiæ auctoritas: et honor per ordinis consessum sanctificatus. Adeo ubi ecclesiastici ordinis non est consessus, et offers et tinguis, et sacerdos es tibi solus. Sed ubi tres, ecclesia est, licet laici. Unusquisque enim sua fide vivit. Nec est personarum acceptio apud Deum; quoniam non auditores legis justificantur a Deo, sed factores, secundum quod et apostolus dicit. Igitur si habes jus sacerdotis in teetipso ubi necesse est, habeas oportet etiam disciplinam sacerdotis, ubi necesse sit habere jus sacerdotis.

'Digamus tinguis? Digamus offers? Quanto magis laico digamo capitale est agere pro sacerdote, quum ipsi sacerdoti digamo facto auferatur agere sacerdotem? Sed necessitati, inquis, indulgetur. Nulla necessitas excusatur quæ potest non esse. Noli denique digamus deprehendi, et non committis in necessitatem administrandi quod non licet digamo. Omnes nos ita Deus vult dispositos esse, ut ubique sacramentis Ejus obeundis apti simus. Unus Deus, una fides, una et disciplina. Usqueadeo nisi et laici ea observent, per quæ presbyteri adleguntur, quomodo erunt presbyteri, qui de laicis adleguntur? Ergo pugnare debemus ante laicum jussum a secundo matrimonio abstinere, dum presbyter esse non alius potest quam laicus semel fuerit maritus.'

the belief of the Catholic Church, at the close of the second century, upon a point, where we have neither right nor reason to judge him unsound—a point upon which he has never been condemned by any early Catholic writer—a point which he assumes, with an apparent unconsciousness that it had ever been contravened, to be universally conceded as true? Can any author of repute be brought forward who either expressly, or implicitly contradicts the position taken up by Tertullian? And the argument is all the stronger because Tertullian is, if anything, an unwilling witness to the *jus sacerdotii* of the laity. But, speaking according to the general belief of his own times, it was too important a fact to be passed over. And he very cleverly turns the tables upon the laity by an *argumentum ad hominem*. ‘You are very proud,’ he says, ‘of your priesthood, given you by the Lord Himself. You rejoice to think that, if a case of necessity should arise, you can any of you offer the Holy Eucharist, or baptize, or exercise any other sacerdotal function. Very true; no one denies this. But then you must also remember—as you yourselves admit, and no one ever denied—that a priest who has married a second time is not allowed to exercise the priestly office. Do not you, therefore, I beseech you, brethren of the laity, contract a second marriage, because, if you do, you will knowingly and wilfully degrade yourselves from the priesthood, or at least incapacitate yourselves for the exercise of its functions.’

A close study of the writings of Tertullian is especially valuable in order to become acquainted with the mind of the earlier Primitive Church upon the question under discussion. His standing-ground is, in the main, upon the same level as the sub-apostolic Church.

At the same time, we are now and again made aware

of a trending away of the table-land in the direction of the ground occupied by the great ecclesiastics of a generation or two later. Or, to use another metaphor, it is as if we still breathed the air of the Church of the Apostles, but were conscious of the beginning of the play of those currents which, if they did not change, yet modified very materially the moral and spiritual atmosphere of the later Church. It is exactly the same with Clement of Alexandria as it is with Tertullian. There is not a hint in his contemporaries, or immediate successors, that he was not perfectly orthodox; and yet so out of tune is his theological teaching with the received ideas of a few generations later, that, without venturing to condemn him, there are few so called orthodox ecclesiastical writers of note who speak of him, who do not seem to regard his writings with a certain under-current of suspicion and dislike.

To realise the exact position occupied by Tertullian, we have only to compare him with St. Clement of Rome on the one hand, and St. Cyprian on the other. He flourished fully three generations after the former, and only a single generation before the latter. Yet he has immensely more in common with him from whom he is more, than with him from whom he is less remote in point of time. And we may test this by a comparison of the teaching of Clement with that of Tertullian upon the ministry of the Church of Christ. We have seen that Tertullian looked upon the official priesthood, and its highest form of expression, the episcopate, as the fruit of ecclesiastical order, and based upon ecclesiastical discipline. We have also seen that, without manipulating historical facts, we must look upon St. Clement himself as having been only the temporary chairman of the presbyter-bishops of Rome.

A few reflections, which are forcibly pressed home upon us by the teaching of St. Clement respecting the vital

questions of Church government and the authority of Church governors, may not unfitly conclude this investigation of the real nature of primitive episcopacy.

It is a thought not unworthy of consideration, that to reconcile the principle of authority as flowing from above with a cheerful recognition of the rights of the people, or authority from below, would be perchance to solve the greatest problem of this age, possibly indeed of any age. And hard as it seems, it was a problem which the primitive Church contrived to solve in practice. Each source of authority, the power from above and the power from below, was fully recognised, and each contributed its own special sanction to the powers which were called to govern. Authority in the Church which comes from above is that grace of Orders, that sacrament of the Saviour's breath, if we may use such an expression, which He bestowed for all time, when He breathed upon His Apostles and said, 'Receive ye the Holy Ghost.' Authority from below is the recognition by the body of Christ, by His whole baptized flock, the Christian plebs, of those who are to be their governors—a recognition which, if it be not expressed in some shape or other, whether by election or by a true, real, actual consent, must at last throw everything into the utter chaos which is now the lamentable state of Christendom. It ought never to be forgotten that there is a divine right of the people, that is to say, of the governed, as well as a divine right of kings and priests, their governors, and that the former is not a whit less divine than the latter. 'Vox populi, vox Dei,' asserts a great truth, although it may often have been misused, and even mediæval churchmen were not averse from recognising it. But now, for century after century, things have gone on from bad to worse. Who could rise up from the perusal of the New Testament,

and the other records of the early Church, when, to use an expression of St. Jerome, 'the blood of our Lord Jesus Christ was yet warm,' and think it possible that that dear Church should ever come to such a pass, that a few cardinals, themselves created by preceding popes, would claim the right to elect a supreme pastor, with infallible authority to govern and teach two hundred millions of his fellow-servants, his brethren and sisters in the household and family of God? Who in the wildest dream of imagination could have supposed it possible that the prime minister of an earthly monarch would ever dare to presume to appoint a bishop to rule over the Flock of God, and to guide millions of souls in the way to an eternal country and a heavenly kingdom? Or if even this could have been imagined, could it, further, have been believed that any pastor so appointed would have had the courage to meet that flock of Christ face to face, and tell them that he was sent by the God of everlasting Truth to rule over them?

Truly, indeed, in these latter days have the words of Isaiah, addressed to Israel, become true of a nobler and greater Church than that of Israel, 'The whole head is sick, the whole heart faint: there is no soundness in it.' They have become true of the whole Catholic Church here on earth. Things were not so bad at the Council of Constance as they have since become; but even that gathering had a glimmering of the wants of the Church, when it declared that a reformation was needed both in the head and the members. It is certain that, in a true bishop or priest truly called to govern and teach, two things must meet—authority from above and authority from below. Without these two combine, he may indeed be a priest of the Catholic Church by virtue of his consecration from above, but he cannot, unless he have the

gift of miracles, prove that he is called to govern any particular flock of Christian people. It was in this divinely appointed marriage of authorities that the primitive Church was strong with such a wondrous strength.

But to claim divine right for governors without the express, even if informal, assent of the governed, is just as great an anomaly as it would be to assert that the Sacrament of Matrimony would be valid, according to the will of God, without the consent of the bride. The theory that the temporal monarch, or a premier elected for a very different object, and to some extent by a very different body, represents, or can represent, the baptized people of Christ, in the appointment of their spiritual rulers, will no more hold good before the awful tribunal of God, than that would be accounted a true marriage in His sight, where the parents or friends of the bride presumed to give her away against, or without her own free will.

It was indeed in the consciousness of her twofold source of strength—twofold in form yet each divine, and one in origin—strong in her divine commission, and strong in the spiritual freedom of all her sons, that the early Catholic Church went forth in the name of her Master and Saviour to subdue the world. And in little more than 200 years the battle was virtually won. An intelligent observer, living about A.D. 300, would have seen that the reign of heathenism in the Roman Empire—that is to say, throughout the then known civilised world—was over for ever. And what in comparison has the Catholic Church accomplished in the fifteen centuries which have since rolled on? All researches tend to prove that the number of idolaters now in the world is no less than it was 1,500 years ago. There must have been a cause or causes for such a miserable state of things—the thought of which is enough to make angels weep tears of blood,

and the wounds of the once crucified Son of Man burst forth afresh, as He looks down from the height of His mediatorial throne upon that Church which He died to save. And the more we ponder, the more clearly shall we discern how all minor and secondary causes run up and are gathered and absorbed into one gigantic error—practical forgetfulness of that divine truth, that the Catholic Church consists of the entire baptized people of Christ, and that there never can be an official Christian ministry upon which God will pour the fulness of apostolic gifts, unless that ministry shall have been appointed with the free consent of those to whom they minister, and whom they are to govern in spiritual things.

The causes which have led to the failure of the Catholic Church for more than a thousand years to fulfil the mission for which God created her on the earth were at work before the time of Constantine, but they were kept in check by the Divine Spirit operating through such glorious pastors as Clement of Rome. But Constantine's establishment of the Church, his weaving together the bands of spiritual and temporal authority into one, joining together things which God had not joined, intensified the disease; made it chronic, and perchance incurable—unless indeed it should please God 'to raise up for Himself a faithful priest who should fulfil all His will,' a pastor of the Universal Church, one not so much a mighty intellect, as one to whom He gives 'a heart as large as the sands of the sea,' so as to embrace and gather together the 'whole family of God,' which has been 'scattered abroad in the cloudy and dark days.'

It should never be forgotten that the truth, that 'what God has joined together no man may put asunder,' has its great correlative truth, that what God has not joined no man may unite. And since Christ had not united the

temporal and spiritual powers, but had said 'My kingdom is not of this world,' it was, even at the time, with all the untried and unknown possibilities of the future before them, a rash act, to say the least, on the part of Constantine and his prelates to join them together. And the subsequent history of the Church has shown that it was moreover a gigantic mistake, and a mistake is sometimes more fatal even than a crime.

Let us now turn to the genuine writings of the apostolic Clement, and we shall find them in perfect unison with the very few certain facts of his history.

CHAPTER II.

THE GENUINE AND SUPPOSITIOUS WRITINGS OF ST. CLEMENT.

THERE are two great principles which can be fairly gathered from St. Clement's First Epistle to the Corinthians. The first is, that he does not deny, but tacitly at least allows, that the Christian ministry of any particular Church is subject to that Church, even to the extent of deprivation. The second is, that bishops and presbyters are of one and the same order. The first principle is involved in the very arguments, reproofs, and expostulations which he addresses to the laity of Corinth for their ill-treatment of their ministers.

When he says,¹ 'We do not think it just that those who were set in their place by the Apostles, or presently afterwards by other famous men, with the approval of the whole Church, and who have blamelessly discharged their ministry in the flock of Christ, humbly, peacefully, diligently, who for a long time have been well reported of by all men, should be removed from their ministry,' he lays down, or rather concedes, a principle. This passage occurs towards the end of the epistle. It is the very point towards which he had been working up throughout. This makes it all the more important. The sedition which the epistle was written to quell was a rising up of the laity of Corinth against their ministers, the bishops or presbyters, and the deacons, and removing them from their station. St. Clement, then, does not, as a later writer

¹ 1 Cor. c. 45.

would probably have done, write to the diocesan bishop of Corinth, and recommend him to excommunicate the offenders, or to lay the whole Corinthian Church under an interdict, but he writes to the people themselves, and in mild and loving, but very firm words shows them their error, shows them that they were acting in a way displeasing to God.

Let his whole line of argument be judged fairly and dispassionately, and it will be found to amount to this—‘I do not deny that it is competent to you to remove wicked or unworthy ministers from their office, but *your* ministers are neither wicked nor unworthy, they are good and holy men, as ye yourselves very well know, and it is for this reason, I say, that you cannot justly deprive them.’ St. Clement’s method succeeded in a case where the anathemas which have been employed in later ages would probably have failed, as anathemas usually have failed. After the receipt of this letter, we hear nothing more of schism or sedition in the Church of Corinth. And so little were the Corinthians offended by St. Clement’s plain speaking, since it was done in love, that his Epistle was read among them as holy and inspired Scripture as late as the time of St. Jerome.¹

The identity of bishops and presbyters, in St. Clement’s view, may be seen from various particulars. There is every reason to believe that in no primitive Church was the bishop more than president, or chairman of the College of Presbyters, a *Primus inter pares*; but the Corinthian Church seems to have been based upon a still more democratic foundation. There is no trace of any permanent president at Corinth for somewhat about a hundred years. St. Clement addresses his epistle simply as, ‘From the Church of God, sojourning

¹ Eus. II. E. iii. 16. See also St. Jerome, *De Viris Illustr.* c. xv.

at Rome, to the Church of God which sojourneth at Corinth.' Had there been a bishop, or even anyone occupying a conspicuous place in the Church, it is only reasonable to suppose that some notice would have been taken of him, or at the least some allusion made to him. Indeed, the state of things appears to have remained, in St. Clement's time, identically the same with what it was when St. Paul addressed both his epistles to the same Church. St. Paul wrote to the Church of God which was at Corinth, and to the saints or believers in Christ there, and in the province of Achaia.

There is, however, one passage of St. Clement's epistle which has been much relied upon by the advocates of diocesan episcopacy, and which deserves a careful examination. It occurs in the 44th chapter,¹ and may be translated thus: 'Our Apostles knew through our Lord Jesus Christ that there would be a strife for the name of Episcopacy. On which account, inasmuch as they were endued with perfect foreknowledge, they appointed those previously mentioned, and they presently afterwards gave it in charge, that when they were gone to their rest, other approved men should succeed to their ministry.' It will be observed that the pronouns 'they' and 'their' in this passage are ambiguous. It is impossible, without a reference to the entire context, to determine their proper significance. For who were the previously mentioned persons whom the Apostles appointed? The 42nd chapter shows us clearly. 'When the Apostles of Christ,' it says, 'were preaching in the cities and countries, it was their custom to constitute their first-fruits, after they had tried

¹ 1 Ep. ad Cor. c. xlv. 'Οἱ ἀπόστολοι ἡμῶν ἔγνωσαν διὰ τοῦ Κυρίου ἡμῶν Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ, ὅτι ἔρις ἔσται ἐπὶ τοῦ ὀνόματος τῆς ἐπισκοπῆς. Διὰ ταύτην οὖν τὴν αἰτίαν πρόγνωσιν εἰληφότες τελείαν κατέστησαν τοὺς προειρημένους, καὶ μεταξὺ ἐπινομήν διδώσασιν, ὅπως, ἐὰν κοιμήθωσιν, διαδέξωνται ἕτεροι δεδοκιμασμένοι ἄνδρες τὴν λειτουργίαν αὐτῶν.'

them, as bishops and deacons of those which should believe. And this was no new thing. It had been written of old time concerning bishops and deacons. For thus saith the Scripture in a certain place, "I will appoint their bishops in righteousness, and their deacons in faithfulness."¹ With such a passage as this before him, it is difficult to conceive how anyone could ever have even so much as dreamed that Clement of Rome held more than two apostolically appointed orders of the Christian ministry—bishops, including presbyters, and deacons. Not only does he, a contemporary of the Apostles, state what the Apostles did, but he gives it as his opinion that, in thus appointing *two* orders, they acted in accordance with the divinely inspired prophecies of the Old Testament.

There is one more important passage of St. Clement to be noticed, in which he draws a comparison between the Jewish and the Christian priesthood. Speaking of the former, he says, 'To the High Priest have been assigned his own peculiar ministrations, and to the priests was appointed their proper place, and the Levites discharge their own functions, and laymen are bound by the precepts incumbent upon them.'² This innocent illustration—for it is nothing more—was subsequently developed, and that in

¹ Is. lx. 17. St. Clement does not follow the LXX in his translation here, but seems to have done what his great master St. Paul did so often, translated the Hebrew for himself. But he appears to have had a somewhat different text from the one we have at present. This passage is one of several, which incline me strongly to the belief that St. Clement was particularly well acquainted with Hebrew. Unless he were, he would scarcely have substituted for the LXX ἀρχοντας, his own rendering, διακόρους, of the Hebrew נְשִׁיךְ. The Eng. Vers. 'exactors' is, in this instance, the best of all.

² 1 Clem. ad Cor. c. xl. 'Τῷ γὰρ ἀρχιερεὶ ἴδιαι λειτουργίαι ἐδό-
μεναι εἰσιν, καὶ τοῖς ἱερεῦσι ἴδιος ὁ τόπος προστέτακται, καὶ Λευίταις
ἴδιαι διακόναι ἐπικέινται· ὁ λαὸς ἀνθρώπος τοῖς λαικοῖς προστετάγμασιν
δίδεται.'

less than two hundred years—if we place, as we fairly may, the date of the Apostolic Constitutions at about A.D. 250—into what can scarcely be described otherwise than a degrading superstition. Still, even then, it is worthy of attention, that the exaltation of bishops, as a prelatie order, had by no means reached its height. For the particular stage of development, upon which we are able to place our finger, when these wrongly called ordinances of the Apostles were compiled, was the period when the episcopal yoke was indeed being securely bound about the necks of the laity; but presbyters still retained a large measure of their ancient freedom. To give a few instances—the case of a very illiterate bishop is supposed.¹ Coercive jurisdiction over his co-presbyters could scarcely be implied. Bishops and deacons are occasionally spoken of in a way which indicates that presbyters were still looked upon as bishops.² In the strongest language made use of to express episcopal power, the laity alone are regarded as subject to it. There is little or no mention of bishops governing presbyters.³ These writings, then, are somewhat reticent as to the episcopal power over priests. This was a yet further development, the manifestations of which St. Jerome in his day, now and again, so severely rebuked.⁴ But for

¹ Apost. Const. ii. 1, 2. ‘Ἐστω οὖν, εἰ δυνατόν, πεπαιδευμένος, εἰ δὲ ἢ ἀγράμματος, ἀλλ’ οὖν ἔμπειρος τοῦ λόγου.’

² ii. 10, 2. Cf. also c. 25, 5, and c. 28. ‘Τοῖς δὲ πρεσβυτέροις, διπλῇ καὶ αὐτοῖς ἀφορίζεσθαι ἡ μοῖρα, εἰς χάριν τῶν τοῦ Κυρίου ἀποστόλων, ὧν καὶ τὸν τόπον φυλάσσουντες ὡς σύμβουλοι τοῦ ἐπισκόπου καὶ τῆς ἐκκλησίας στέφανος.’ This passage is important in another way, as showing that presbyters were still regarded and spoken of in the third century as successors of the Apostles, and ‘occupying their place in the Church.’ When bishops came to be looked upon as exclusively, or even *par excellence*, successors of the Apostles it is hard to say exactly, but it was comparatively very late.

³ See esp. ii. cc. 14, 15, 16.

⁴ ‘Illud etiam dico quod Episcopi sacerdotes se esse noverint, non dominos.’ He had already spoken in a former epistle to Heliodorus of

the apparent absence of power over presbyters, the Constitutions amply compensate the episcopate by endowing it with the most tremendous jurisdiction over the laity. They are to look up to the bishop as to God. He is, 'after God in heaven, to be the layman's god upon earth.'¹ Thus early—that is to say, 150 years after the death of the last Apostle—were the most persistent efforts made to reduce the flock of Christ, which He had freed and ennobled, under a bitter bondage worse than Egyptian slavery.

The Apostolic Constitutions make much, as might be supposed, of the threefold division of the Levitical ministry; and they assert, in so many words, that the bishop stands in the place of the high priest, the presbyters, of the ordinary priests, whilst the deacons represent the Levites.² We have already seen that the first germ of

all presbyters as sacerdotes: 'Honorent Clericos quasi clericos; ut et ipsis a clericis quasi Episcopis honor deferatur. Scitum illud est oratoris Domitii—"Cur ego te habeam ut principem, cum tu non me habeas ut Senatorem?" Quod Aaron et filios ejus, hoc Episcopum et Presbyteros esse noverimus. Unus Dominus, unum Templum, unum sit etiam Ministerium. Recordemur semper quod Ap. Petrus præcipiat Sacerdotibus, "Pascite eum, qui in vobis est, gregem. . . . neque ut dominantes in Clerum." Pessimæ consuetudinis est in quibusdam ecclesiis tacere Presbyteros, et præsentibus Episcopis non loqui, quasi aut invideant, aut non dignentur audire.'—Ep. ii. ad Heliod. It is a little curious that in this epistle St. Jerome should translate St. Pet. v. 3, by the stronger expression 'in clerum,' whilst in the Vulg. he only gives 'in cleris.'

¹ 'Οὗτος, i.e. ἐπίσκοπος, ὑμῶν, sc. ἀνδρῶν λαϊκῶν, ἐπίγειος θεὸς μετὰ Θεόν.—Apost. Const. ii. 26 and 29. 'Διατὶ μὴ καὶ ὑμεῖς τοὺς μεσίτας ὑμῶν τοῦ λόγου προφήτας εἶναι νομίσητε, καὶ τοὺς ἐπισκόπους ὡς θεοὺς σεβασθήσεσθε; . . . εἰ οὖν ἐρρέθη Μωύσης ὑπὸ Κυρίου θεός, καὶ ὁ Ἀάρων προφήτης, καὶ ὑμῖν ὁ ἐπίσκοπος εἰς θεὸν τετιμῆσθω, καὶ ὁ διάκονος ὡς προφήτης αὐτοῦ.' Such passages might be multiplied indefinitely, and are to my mind a full justification for the expression, 'degrading superstition.'

² Lib. ii. c. 25, 12. 'Οὗτοι γὰρ, sc. ἐπίσκοποι, εἰσιν ὑμῶν οἱ ἀρχιερεῖς· οἱ δὲ ἱερεῖς ὑμῶν οἱ πρεσβύτεροι, καὶ οἱ λευῖται ὑμῶν οἱ ῥῆν διάκονοι,' κ.τ.λ.

such an idea is to be found in St. Clement, and that he uses it merely to illustrate the beauty of order as opposed to disorder.

A vast and imposing hierarchical structure has been built up upon this seeming analogy. But it only requires to examine it to be convinced of the sandy nature of the foundation on which it rests. It is instructive to notice how, in the Constitutions, page after page is occupied in recapitulating the passages of the Old Testament which enjoin or imply the duty of reverence and obedience to the ancient priesthood, *as a priesthood*, and then to mark the altogether irrelevant and illogical conclusion, that a like, or even a greater, measure of obedience is to be claimed for a bishop, as the Christian *high priest*.¹ But even supposing it to be granted that every bishop stands in the place of the high priest, we are still a long way from the inference that therefore bishops and presbyters are two distinct orders. In a loose manner of speaking, it may be said, of course, that there are three orders—bishops, priests, and deacons; but what the advocates of diocesan episcopacy wish to prove is, that the episcopal order—in other words, the Christian high priests—have alone the power of conferring Orders, that they only can make other bishops and presbyters; that, in fact, supposing the entire episcopate of the Catholic Church had been cut off in one of the early persecutions, or supposing that they were all gathered together in an Œcumenical Council, and that the city where they were assembled were swallowed up by an earthquake, then in the next generation the

¹ See Lib. ii. 'Ὡς οὖν οὐκ ἦν ἐξὸν ἀλλογεῖν, μὴ ὄντα Λευίτην, προσέειπαί τι, ἢ προσελθεῖν εἰς τὸ θυσιαστήριον ἄνευ τοῦ ἱερέως, οὕτω καὶ ὑμεῖς ἄνευ τοῦ ἐπισκόπου μηδὲν ποιεῖτε.' This is a specimen. Every reader will see that the only logical and relevant conclusion from the premises laid down would be, not, 'without the Bishop do nothing,' but, 'Do nothing without the Presbyter.'

Catholic Church herself must cease to be. To those who have drunk in draughts of spiritual freedom from the crystal fountain of the living Gospel of Christ, it is indeed hard to think that the Divine Head of the Catholic Church would ever have made her continued existence depend upon any one particular form of external organisation. But whether this be so or not, the analogy of the Levitical priesthood is entirely opposed to such an idea. The Jewish high priest was not a distinct order, consisting of himself alone, for the purpose of making other high priests. In the ordinary course of things there could be but one high priest at a time, or at the most two. And it so happens that we have on record an episode in Israelitish history, when the reigning high priest and his two sons, one of whom would, in due course, have been his successor, all died together without the possibility of their consecrating any one to succeed them. In one day Eli and his two sons, Hophni and Phinehas, were suddenly cut off. It could not require a high priest to consecrate a high priest, for, if it did, who consecrated Eli's successor?¹ Thus, so far as this very ancient and much relied upon analogy is concerned, the case for episcopacy breaks down, and the only inference which can be drawn from it is, that it does *not* require a bishop to consecrate a bishop.

¹ 1 Sam. iv. 11. 'The two sons of Eli,' apparently his only two, 'were slain.' This from the narrative must have happened sometime in the afternoon. Later on, in the evening of the same day, Eli himself, the high priest, fell backward from his seat—Josephus calls it his throne—by the side of the gate of Shiloh, and brake his neck and died. Still later, on the same day, the wife of Phinehas gave birth to Ichabod. Ichabod had an elder brother called Abiah or Ahimelech, who afterwards became high priest, but a comparison of dates will show that he could not, in all probability, have been old enough to officiate at the time of his father's death; and even if he had been, who was his consecrator?

And yet it would be a mistake to suppose that there is nothing in the analogy. There is a distinction which can fairly be drawn between a bishop, technically so called, and a presbyter; and that distinction may be called, though not in accurate language, a distinction of Order. To place the essence of this distinction between the presbyter as priest and the bishop as high priest, as consisting in the power of the latter alone to make other priests, is not only illogical, but, what is of more consequence, is unsupported by so much as a shadow of real evidence derived from the history of the Church for two hundred years after the Day of Pentecost.

If we now refer to the Books of Exodus and Leviticus, we shall find that the distinction between Aaron, the high priest, and his sons, who were the ordinary priests, included two things—a peculiar office or function, namely, the entering into the holy of holies within the veil, once in the year, upon the great Day of Atonement;¹ and in receiving a special anointing upon the head with the holy oil,² in addition to the sprinkling of his garments with oil and blood, which was common to him with all other priests.³ It is very probable, indeed, that both these

¹ See the whole of Lev. xvi., especially verse 17.

² Cf. Lev. viii. 12, 'And he poured of the anointing oil upon Aaron's head, and anointed him to sanctify him'—which seems to have been confined to the high priest—with verse 30, 'And Moses took of the anointing oil, and of the blood, which was upon the altar, and sprinkled it upon Aaron, and upon his garments, and upon his sons, and upon his sons' garments with him.'

³ There was a less important mark of distinction, which it may be well to mention, so as to escape all risk of imputation of unfairness. It was a distinction of dress. (See Lev. viii. 7.) Of Aaron it is said: 'And he put on him the coat, and girded him with the girdle, and clothed him with the robe, and put the ephod upon him, and he girded him with the curious girdle of the ephod—and he put the breastplate upon him; and he put the mitre upon his head—also upon the mitre

things are types, and if so, they have been fulfilled in the Christian Dispensation. The first by Christ entering into heaven, 'the holy place not made with hands,' after He had, as priest and victim both, made the great atonement of the cross, as the author of the Epistle to the Hebrews shows. But Aaron's second mark of distinction, his special anointing, may have been fulfilled by the placing one of the presbyter-bishops in the seat of honour in the midst of his brethren, so that he became the chairman, or president, the bishop *par excellence*.¹ This we have

did he put the golden plate, the holy crown.' But of Aaron's sons, it is only said (see verse 13): 'He put coats upon them, and girded them with girdles, and put bonnets upon them.'

¹ In the foregoing remarks, I have merely examined the common theory that every bishop occupies, analogically, the position of the Jewish high priest. The more direct analogy would be, that there should be but one chief bishop or priest in the Church at any one time, differing from his brethren in rank, not in order. Jealousy of Rome would of course always be likely to stand in the way of such an analogy being very generally recognised. And I am not aware that such an idea was even so much as entertained for the first eight or nine centuries, with one very remarkable exception, which, as far as I know, has hitherto escaped attention. It occurs in Origen, Hom. xvii. in Gen. He is expounding Gen xlix. 10: 'Non deficiet Princeps, &c., usquequo veniant ea, quæ reposita sunt ei (vel, ut in aliis exemplaribus habetur, veniat is, cui repositum est), et ipse erit expectatio gentium.' After giving the commonly received explanation about Herod becoming king, who was an alien, Origen proceeds:—'Si vero quis in omnibus cupiat cursum utriusque expositionis aptare, potest extorquere fortassis, ut etiam de Christo hæc hoc modo videantur intelligi, quia non deficiet princeps ex Juda, id est, qui post Resurrectionem Ejus ecclesiarum princeps ordinatur.' (Tom v. of the Winceburgh Ed. p. 290.) The passage is ambiguous enough certainly, and it would prove nothing; but it appears to me to show at least this, that the idea of there being one chief prince or primate of the Catholic Church had crossed Origen's mind. His use of 'extorquere' convinces me that by such prince he did not mean Christ, but an earthly head. Anyhow, in reading Origen, I have often wondered that the passage should have escaped the notice of both Roman and Protestant controversialists, who may be said to have ransacked heaven and earth for points in favour of their respective systems.

direct evidence to prove was actually the rule of the Church of Alexandria; and when, as we also know, this placing a presbyter in the presidential throne was accompanied by special prayers, and by his being solemnly blessed by his brother presbyters, then the analogy with the Levitical priesthood is so far complete.¹

Ordinarily, upon the death of any Jewish high priest, the remaining priests would assemble and consecrate one of their own number to be his successor, by pouring the oil upon his head, and by clothing him with the garments appropriated to the high priest.² In cases, indeed, where the high priest resigned his office before his death, he might very probably take part in the consecration of his successor; but that he should do so, could not, in the very nature of things, have been any necessary part of the ritual. Thus then it is demonstrable that the idea which has gradually grown up, that presbyters cannot be ordained without a bishop, is not only unsupported by the analogy of the Levitical priesthood, but is indeed directly opposed to it. It is not very difficult to trace how this mistaken idea originated and gradually prevailed. In every little town, sometimes even in villages, where there was a Christian community, there were several presbyters. In some of these communities or churches, as early as the times of the Apostles, and probably by about the middle

¹ The question of the Alexandrine Church will be fully discussed elsewhere.

² But in the case where Aaron was succeeded by his son Eleazar (see Numb. xx. 25-29), there is no mention of the latter receiving any fresh anointing. Aaron put off the high priest's robes, and Eleazar put them on. Nothing more is recorded there as being actually done. But cf. Ex. xxix. 29, which would seem fairly to imply that the special anointing of the head, spoken of in a former note, would ordinarily take place. At the same time, in Eleazar's case, it must have been after his father's death.

of the second century in all, one of these presbyters was appointed or elected to the office of president, and was sometimes called *the* bishop. In all solemn functions he ordinarily took a leading part. He gave Baptism at the great festivals of Easter and Whitsuntide; he celebrated the Holy Eucharist upon the Lord's-day in the assembly of the faithful.¹ It was wrong to do anything of importance without his knowledge, a grievous sin to perform any act of spiritual authority in opposition to him—not because the act would thereby be invalid, but because its performance would be an offence against the order and unity and peace of the whole Church.² But especially at those times when presbyters, who had been chosen by the people for the ministry of the word and sacraments, were to be ordained, did the office of the bishop-president become of prime dignity and prominence. Then the whole body of the faithful would be gathered together, and the president, surrounded by his fellow-bishops or fellow-presbyters, would, together with them, lay his hands upon the Ordinand, as they were called, and admit them to the sacred ministry. Upon such occasions we may well believe that the president would never, or scarcely ever, be absent; and thus the opinion would gradually prevail that his presence was essential, not merely to manifest the visible unity of the Church, but to confer that grace of holy

¹ See Bingham, *Eccles. Ant.* b. ii. cap. 3—where he carries the prerogatives of bishops to the highest possible pitch, making even preaching on the part of a presbyter to be nothing more than a delegated function, allowed, or perhaps tolerated rather, by his superior. He gives a great number of valuable references, but chiefly to writers subsequent to 250 A.D. All real students of Ecclesiastical History are recommended to examine them carefully for themselves, and it is by no means impossible that they may find them speak to them in a different voice from that which Bingham heard.

² This seems the fairest and most reasonable interpretation of the strong things said by St. Ignatius of Antioch. Cf. *Ep. ad Smyrn.* cap. viii. with *Ep. ad Trall.* cap. vii.

orders which without him could not be otherwise obtained.¹ There is, however, in the good providence of God, not wanting a remarkable token to show us that this necessity, so to say, of episcopacy was not from the beginning. In all episcopal churches the practice has ever been, that at the ordination of presbyters, all the priests who are present should lay their hands, at the same time as the bishop, upon the heads of the candidates for the priesthood. Very ancient and very wide-spread practices are often far safer guides to the mind of the Catholic Church than dogmas which have too often been evolved by theologians merely from the depths of their own internal consciousness.² The present is a case in point. No

¹ We may gather from the present practice of the Wesleyan Methodist Body, with respect to ordination, an intimation of how the idea of the necessity of a bishop for holy orders to be valid came gradually to prevail. The Wesleyan rule is as follows:—The president and four of the oldest ministers place their hands upon the candidate's head, and the president of the Conference repeats the formula, 'Take thou authority,' &c. Those five, in the name of the Holy Ghost, are supposed to give the external commission to preach and administer the sacraments. If Wesleyanism were to exist in its present form, and as a separate community for the next 200 or 300 years, and if this were an uncritical age like the three first centuries of Christianity, and if the presidency of the Conference were to come to be held for life by some minister of very marked superiority for learning or piety, the most unreflective mind can understand how easily the idea would prevail, that the president's taking part was of the *de esse* of ordination.

² It is not often that perfect parallels can be met with, either in the kingdom of nature or the kingdom of grace; but so far as a parallel can be perfect, it will be found in another practice of the Western Church. It is directed by the Pontificale Romanum that when, after an ordination, mass is said by the officiating bishop, all the newly ordained priests should unite with him in saying the Prayer of Consecration, and in the performance of what are called the manual acts. Whatever may be the exact effect of consecration in the Holy Eucharist, one thing would be conceded by all Churches, which is that it must be something in its nature indivisible. The effect must be

really ancient Catholic practice is devoid of some inherent significance. As, therefore, the power conferred by the gift of the Christian priesthood to exercise certain spiritual functions must of its very nature be one and indivisible, it follows, by a clear logical deduction, that if that power can only be conferred by the laying on of the bishop's hands, then the imposition of the hands of the presbytery can add nothing to the gift, neither can the omission of the laying on of their hands detract in any way from it. And thus we should be forced to the conclusion, that when the Catholic Church ordained or sanctioned this custom, she ordained at the outset, and has gone on for eighteen hundred years giving her approbation to what is nothing better than a vain, empty, meaningless, misleading ceremony. The mind shrinks with horror from any such idea. The truth, therefore, would seem to be, that the most proper way, so far as regards order and seemliness, and the manifestation of the visible unity of the Church, is, that a bishop and his presbyters should unite in ordaining a presbyter; but that in a case of necessity, ordination by a bishop alone, or by a presbyter alone, would each be equally and therefore perfectly valid; the grace and the power of holy orders would either way be conferred, and either way must be the same.

Anglican theological writers, who have done at least this service to the cause of the Church's freedom, that they have shown very clearly that the primacy of the

absolutely the same, whether there be ten thousand consecrators or only one. The significance, therefore, of this direction of the Pontifical is obvious enough. It is to exhibit in a visible and practical manner, which everybody can understand, the fact that the newly ordained priests have the same power to consecrate the Eucharist which the celebrating bishop who ordained them has. This great principle can be applied, by parity of reasoning, with equal force to ordination itself.

Roman Pontiff is only a primacy, and not properly a supremacy, do not seem to have been aware that exactly the same line of argument can be used to show that the primacy or presidency of the episcopate is merely a primacy, a presiding, that is, in the midst of their fellow presbyters, and not an inherent right of jurisdiction by virtue of any apostolic, far less of any divine, appointment. It may be allowed that there are a few things which look the other way, but they are very few indeed. And this at least is certain, that no one can read all the ante-Nicene Fathers without coming to the conclusion, that there is quite as much, if not more, evidence for Roman than there is for episcopal supremacy. The primacy *may* possibly be of divine institution, but it is absolutely impossible to prove from Holy Scripture, or from antiquity, or from both combined, that anything beyond this, either of order or supremacy, or jurisdiction, or government, or authority, rests upon any other basis than the consent and concession of the governed; that is to say, it exists by the sufferance of the whole body of the faithful, which is indeed the Catholic Church of Christ here upon earth. And let it be the watchword of these latter days, let it be the motto which is inscribed upon the Church's banner when she goes forth in her spiritual armour to fight for that liberty wherewith her Lord endowed her, that *what the Church gave the Church can take away*. When the Catholic Church comes to reconstruct the entire framework of her external organisation, as she very soon will do, let her not forget that the tyranny of the Bishop of Rome is not the only tyranny from which she has ever suffered, that there have been other encroachments besides papal encroachments, and that the Roman pontiff has not been the only person who has used for his own aggrandisement powers and privileges originally entrusted to him for widely different purposes.

To return to St. Clement. His First Epistle to the Corinthians is spoken of, or quoted, or referred to, and apparently for the most part with the same reverence as any portion of our present canon of the New Testament, by the following early writers—St. Polycarp, probably; St. Irenæus, who calls it ‘a most important work;’¹ by Clement of Alexandria many times, and once as ‘the Epistle of Clement the Apostle;’ by Origen, not unfrequently, who speaks of the writer as ‘the faithful Clement.’ Eusebius speaks of it in the highest terms in two places. ‘Of this Clement,’ he says, ‘there is extant one undoubted epistle, great and admirable, being the one which he wrote from the Church of Rome to the Church of Corinth when a schism had arisen among them. We know that this Epistle was anciently read in public in most churches, and still continues to be thus read in our own day.’²

In another passage he says that, ‘there is an Epistle of Clement, written in the name of the Church of the Romans to the Church of the Corinthians, and acknowledged by everyone to be his.’³

Eusebius, in this place, speaking of Clement and others by name, says that ‘they held the first rank in the Apostolic succession;’ ‘they everywhere built up the Churches, whose foundations had been laid by the Apostles;’ ‘they proclaimed the Kingdom of Heaven, and scattered the seeds of salvation throughout the whole world;’ ‘they travelled into foreign lands to fulfil the office of evangelists, being zealous to preach Christ to those who had not

¹ Γραφή ἱκανωτάτη, l. iii. c. 3; but *ἱκ.* is a very difficult word to translate.

² H. E. iii. 16.

³ H. E. iii. 37. This last chapter of Eusebius is an important one in many ways, and ought to be carefully examined by every student of Ecclesiastical History.

heard the word of faith, and to deliver the divine scriptures of the holy Gospels ;' 'after they had laid the foundations of the faith in any place, they appointed other shepherds of the flocks, but they themselves passed on to the regions beyond, the grace of God working with them ;' 'there were still many wonderful miracles of the Divine Spirit wrought by their agency, by means of which great multitudes of those who heard them were converted to God.' Yet with all this ascription of miraculous gifts to the author, it is evident that Eusebius does not include St. Clement's Epistle in the canon of Scripture :¹ whilst the Epistle of St. Barnabas, which does not seem to have been ever publicly used in the Churches, he does include.

This is one instance out of many which shows upon what arbitrary, and sometimes mutually conflicting rules the present New Testament canon has been drawn up.

No writer whose mother tongue was Latin—except St. Jerome, who knew most things—appears to have had any knowledge of this epistle. This renders it possible that it was never translated into the language of ancient Rome, and may perhaps help to account for the utter obscurity into which it fell after the fifth century.

It is refreshing, in turning from the din of controversy, to find writers of all parties, and schools, and shades of opinion agreeing, with well-nigh one consent, that St. Clement's epistle breathes the purest spirit of primitive Christianity in its first fresh glow of faith and love. Exception may be taken by some to a point here and there, but they are scarcely able to disturb the general harmony.²

¹ See H. E. iii. 25. It is not mentioned even among the ἀντιλεγόμενα.

² St. Clement's belief in the tale of the phoenix is the instance usually brought forward by writers who maintain the theory that the Books of the Old and New Testaments are different *in genere* from all

St. Clement, like all the Fathers of the Church, was well acquainted with the Scriptures of the Old Testament, though he seldom quotes them with verbal accuracy. There are a few exceptions, however, which are sufficiently remarkable to be worth attention. He evidently always, or nearly always, cites the shorter passages from memory ; and it will be found upon a careful analysis that he quotes the Psalms with very much greater verbal accuracy, following chiefly the Septuagint, than he does any other book. Can any reason be assigned for this difference ? We think there can, and that it may be traced to the daily recitation of the Psalms, as the chief component part of those devotional offices of which we find traces in very early times indeed, and which was the germ out of which ultimately developed the wonderful Breviary System of the Catholic Church. In addition to this, several invariable Psalms were recited in most ancient liturgies. And it is probable enough that these were supplemented by variable Psalms, appropriate to the great festivals, though the evidence for this has to be sought later on.¹ Again, it is a matter of

other writings. But as a set-off against this illustration of the Resurrection by the phoenix, we may adduce what he says, upon the same subject, in most accurate language, of the seed sown in the ground, compared with the verbally less accurate language of St. Paul, in making use of the same illustration. St. Paul says : ‘ O foolish one ! that which thou sowest is not quickened except it die ’ (1 Cor. xv. 36). Properly speaking, the seed which is cast into the ground does not die before it springs up again. And so St. Clement says : ‘ When seeds are sown in the earth, that which is cast into the ground dry and naked is *dissolved* (διαλύεται). Then from the dissolution (ἐκ τῆς διαλύσεως), the greatness of the providence of the Lord raises up the seeds, and from one gives great increase, and it bears fruit. ’ Could modern physiological science describe more accurately the process of germination ? — 1 Clem. Cor. c. xxiv.

¹ One or two examples of what is meant are given. In St. Mark’s liturgy, for instance, occurs the rubric, not long after the commencement—‘ They say the Stichos. ’ ‘ The Stichos, ’ says Dr. Neale, ‘ is a

some interest, that when St. Clement quotes the 53rd chapter of Isaiah, he follows the Septuagint word for word, making allowances for differences of reading, just as a modern writer might do. The only variation of

short varying versicle and response, answering virtually to the Gradual in the Roman Rite.' I am not sufficiently acquainted with the Eastern liturgical offices to say whether the Stichos is always, or nearly always, taken from the Psalms; but I have found such Stichoi as I have been able to examine invariably so taken. So completely is this the case in the Roman Church, that it would be sufficiently accurate for practical purposes to say that the Gradual is a short passage taken from the Psalms, followed by a Respond. Judging by the general structure and character of the Greek liturgies, the Stichos was not a very ancient portion of them, comparatively speaking. But the insertion of whole verses of the Psalms in some of the prayers is in all probability coeval with the formation of the liturgies themselves; for example, in the 'Prayer for the King:' (Ps. xxxv. 2) 'Lay hold upon the shield and buckler, and stand up to help him.' Again, in the 'Prayer for the whole of the Clergy:' (Ps. lxxviii. 1) 'Let God arise, and let His enemies be scattered: let them also that hate Him flee before Him.' I believe myself it was these verses in the invariable portions of the liturgies which gave rise to the very beautiful system of the variable parts. Examples of entire Psalms being said or sung are Ps. cl. in the liturgy of St. Mark, after consecration. The idea seems to be that of using it as a thanksgiving for the blessings received in Holy Mysteries. It would thus answer to the direction in the Roman Church to all priests to use the same Psalm as a thanksgiving after mass. Again, in St. Mark's Liturgy, immediately after the priest's own communion, and before communicating the rest of the clergy and the people, he says another Psalm, the 42nd—'As the hart panteth after the water-brooks.' To show the wonderful way in which the services of the Church have been woven out of Holy Scripture, but especially out of the Psalms, and the varying though always beautiful applications to which the Psalms have been put, St. Augustine says that this same 42nd Psalm in his day was solemnly chanted at the font in the Baptismal Service. The above notes are the merest touching, as it were, of a single portion of the fringe of the outward garments of the Catholic Church, of that Bride of the Lamb, whose clothing is of wrought gold. It would require a treatise to enter upon the subject with any fulness; but what I have said may indicate to some one, with leisure and ability for the task, what a golden harvest there is to be reaped.

moment seems to be that, where the Septuagint now has, 'He was led,'¹ or 'was brought, as a sheep to the slaughter,' St. Clement read, 'He came,' bringing out more prominently the voluntary nature of the sacrifice of the death of Christ. 'My Life no one taketh from Me : but I lay it down of Myself.'

There are many passages of singular grace and beauty scattered through the epistle, passages which it is difficult to understand how it can be maintained that they are, intrinsically considered, inferior to canonical writings. Take, for instance, the 16th chapter : 'Christ belongs to those who are lowly in heart, not to those who exalt themselves over His flock.' What a terrible rebuke to prelacy ! 'The Sceptre of the majesty of God, our Lord Jesus Christ, came not with boasting or haughty pomp, although He was mighty ; but with lowliness of mind, even as the Holy Ghost spake concerning Him.' And then the writer proceeds, as we have said, to quote the whole of the 53rd of Isaiah with verbal accuracy ; showing, in all probability, that while he gives short quotations from memory, yet for a comparatively long passage like this he would have the roll of the book of the Evangelical Prophet spread out before him. After the quotation he concludes by saying, 'Ye see, brethren beloved, what a pattern has been given unto us : for if the Lord was thus humble-minded Himself, what ought we to be, who through Him have come under the yoke of His grace ?' The 20th chapter, again, is a magnificent burst of the highest order of eloquence, of which translations can give but a very inadequate idea :—

'The heavens, by His dispensation, revolving in peace, are subject to Him : day and night, interfering not one with the other, accomplish their course, which He has marked

¹ ἡλχθη.

out for them : sun and moon, and the choirs of the stars in harmony, by His command, traverse as in a dance their appointed circuits, and never overpass them : the teeming earth, according to His will, causeth to spring forth in their due seasons every kind of food both for men and beasts, and all other creatures which are thereon ; neither doth she alter anything of that which He hath decreed : the unfathomable depths of the abyss, and the unsearchable judgments of the regions that are beneath the earth are kept in order by His command : the mighty cavities of the sea, where the waters are gathered together by His governance, do not transgress their bars ; but according as He hath enjoined, so they do—for He hath said, Thus far shalt thou come, and here shall thy waves be restrained : that ocean which man cannot cross, and the worlds which are beyond it, are subject to the ordinances of the same Lord : spring-time and summer, and autumn and winter, give place in peace, one to another : the winds, according to their quarters, in due season, fulfil unblamably their ministry :¹ the perennial fountains, ordained for health and refreshment, afford their nourishment for the life of men : and even the meanest of the creatures meet together, as He hath willed, in peace and concord. All these things their great Creator and their Lord has ordained in peace and unity, doing good to all, but more abundantly to usward, who have fled for refuge to His mercy, through our Lord Jesus Christ, to Whom be the glory and the majesty, for ever and ever. Amen.

It is impossible to read this passage, and compare it with the ancient Greek liturgies, particularly the one which goes by the name of St. Clement, without being

¹ Cf. Eccles. i. 6. Ancient writers seem to have realised much more forcibly than modern ones, until at least very recently, that the winds are under the dominion of settled laws.

struck with the similarity of the language and the absolute identity of thought and expression.¹

In the last place, it is very interesting to notice how St. Clement, in describing the foundation of the Christian Church, bases everything first upon the *facts* of the Incarnation, the Death, and the Resurrection of Christ, then of His sending His Apostles—they in their turn sending bishops and deacons to teach and preach those facts. He as completely ignores the New Testament Scriptures in any connection with the original establishment of the Catholic Church, as if a line of them had never been penned. This helps to make clear two things of great importance: first, that the deposit of the Christian Revelation was committed by its Divine Author to a body of living men, to be by them committed in turn to others from age to age; secondly, that sacred and venerable and priceless as the Canonical Scriptures must ever be held to be, yet the Christian Church is in no way dependent upon them, either for its first foundation or its continued existence, in such a manner that if the Scriptures were lost or destroyed, the Church herself must therefore cease to be. It is well for Christian men not to forget that the Catholic Church is the living body of a living Christ, and dependent for its perpetual life and being upon one only thing, the ever-abiding presence of the

¹ It is almost certain, either that the epistle imitated the liturgy, or else that the liturgy borrowed from the epistle. That the former is the true hypothesis is the judgment of many liturgical scholars. On the general question of the authorship of the so-called Apostolical Constitutions, in which we find the Clementine Liturgy embedded, it is very noteworthy, that although the Constitutions were forged wholly, or mainly, in the interest of episcopacy, yet the unknown author inserted the liturgy, which was at least older than his own age, in his forgery, without perceiving that it contains many telling passages against episcopacy. Thanks to this uncritical habit, these primitive forgeries often furnish us with the evidence for their own detection.

living SPIRIT, God the Holy Ghost. It is for bringing out into clear relief such truths as this, so needful in these latter days, that the writings and the lives of what are called the Apostolic Fathers are peculiarly valuable. For instance, in his 42nd chapter, Clement asserts boldly and distinctly the apostolic mission thus: 'The Apostles brought us the good news of the Gospel from the Lord Jesus Christ, Jesus Christ from God. Christ was sent forth from God, and the Apostles from Christ; and both were agreeable to the will of God.' It has not been altogether for the greater glory of God that the Church has ceased more and more to assert her direct commission from heaven to go and to make disciples of all nations, and to rest instead her claim to authority upon the words of a written book. We shall find the authority and power of the *living* Witness brought out even more forcibly, when we come to treat of the teaching of St. Ignatius of Antioch.

It will be convenient to examine in this place the liturgy which passes under the name of St. Clement, though why it is difficult to say. There is no particular reason why it should not be his, but the evidence for ascribing it to him is very scanty and insufficient. Dr. J. M. Neale, than whom there is no greater name in the special department of liturgiology, says, in the preface to his edition of the 'Ancient Greek Liturgies,' that supposing the Apostolic Constitutions, of which it forms a part, be assigned to the third century, the liturgy is probably of a far earlier date. He mentions the opinion that it was the production of Judaizing Christians, a theory for which he says, very truly, he cannot see the least ground. He himself could more easily imagine 'that it was the liturgy, in all its main points, given by St. Paul to the Churches of his foundation; the whole language and tenor of thought so closely resembling that

of the Apostle of the Gentiles, and one expression of his, "cleansing ourselves from all filthiness both of the flesh and spirit," actually occurring seven times in its course.' 'At the same time,' he adds, 'it is not actually certain that the Clementine Liturgy was ever actually used anywhere; or that it was more than a kind of normal liturgy, drawn up by the compiler, whoever he were, of the Apostolical Constitutions.'

Dismissing then the question of authorship, which is of no particular interest, if we come to the consideration of the liturgy itself, we shall find it to be indeed a mine from whence to extract the most valuable materials for helping us to gain a knowledge of the primitive Church. The opening rubric is very remarkable: 'In the early morning, let (the celebrant) be seated in the special place of honour assigned to him, with the rest of the bishops by his side; and let them all salute him with a kiss in the Lord. And after the reading of the Law and the Prophets, of our Epistles, and of the Acts and the Gospels, let him that has been chosen (to celebrate) salute the Church by saying, "The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God, and the fellowship of the Holy Ghost be with you all."' To whatever date we may choose to assign this rubric, it is almost equally remarkable. If we place its composition in the age of the Apostles themselves—somewhere, that is, in the first century—then the conclusion is inevitable that a considerable portion of the liturgy itself must be of equal antiquity; if, on the other hand, we bring it down to the end of the second century, or the beginning or middle of the third, it is perfectly evident that even thus late presbyters were still called bishops. It proves indeed a good deal more; it shows that the chief ministers in a Christian assemblage were *all* called bishops, and that the one who

was chosen to celebrate was enthroned, as the Greek expresses it, in the chief seat in the midst of his brethren, the presbyter-bishops. This brings out very forcibly, that the distinction between the first and second thrones, the technical names in the Eastern Church for the episcopate and the presbyterate, was for a century or two a distinction of name or rank, not of order. The mistake which has been made by the advocates of what is called the divine, or apostolic, institution of episcopacy has been, that they have gone to writers of the third and fourth centuries,¹ such as St. Cyprian and St. Ambrose, to prove their point, instead of ascending to the first and second centuries, where they would have found themselves in a far different atmosphere. We have already seen reason to think, from the testimony of Tertullian and others, that the Apostles themselves appointed, in many of the Churches which they founded, presidents, or chairmen, of the presbyteral colleges. But the liturgy of St. Clement brings evidence to show that this was far from being their universal practice, but that in the churches of many cities and towns the president was elected by his fellow bishops only for a time, or for some special occasion.²

¹ This is remarkably the case with Bishop Andrews, of whom I would wish to say it with all reverence for his piety and learning.

² The rubric is so important that it is given in full: 'Καὶ τῇ ἔωθεν ἐνθρονίζεσθω εἰς τὸν αὐτῷ διαφέροντα τόπον παρὰ τῶν λοιπῶν ἐπισκόπων, παντῶν αὐτὸν φιλησάντων τῷ ἐν Κυρίῳ φιλήματι. Καὶ μετὰ τὴν ἀνάγνωσιν τοῦ νόμου καὶ τῶν προφητῶν, τῶν τε ἐπιστολῶν ἡμῶν καὶ τῶν πραξέων καὶ τῶν εὐαγγελιῶν, ἀσπασάσθω ὁ χειροτονηθεὶς τὴν ἐκκλησίαν.' The Apostolical Constitutions connect this rubric with a service immediately preceding it, which is called the Office for the Ordination of a Bishop. But if we examine this office carefully, we shall find that it is, what all primitive Christianity would lead us to expect, a description of the way in which a presbyter was elected by clergy and people to the office of arch-presbyter, or high priest (ἀρχιερεὺς), the manner of blessing him upon his appointment, and what we should call

When we come to recognise the great principle that a bishop, technically so called, was necessary merely for administrative purposes, as a kind of delegated federal head, we shall see clearly the beauty and the harmony of the primitive Church, a harmony not marred, but even enhanced by this want of absolute uniformity in non-essentials. The evidence then seems to show that in most of the larger and more important Churches—such as Jerusalem, Antioch, Smyrna, Rome—these presidents were first nominated by the Apostles; but that in many of the smaller and less important Churches the choice was left to the Churches themselves, if, that is, they wished for a president. The nature of things is in support of this evidence, because a recognised president would be more needed for the administration of a large church than for that of a small one. But even in this respect the practice of the first preachers of Christianity was by no means uniform. Corinth and Alexandria were both large and important Churches, in which no president appears to have been appointed by their founders.

As we proceed further in the liturgy of St. Clement we shall find that, in the rubrical directions, the celebrant of the day, who, as we have seen, was elected from his fellow bishops sitting around him, is designated by those special names and titles which came in after ages to be

his enthronisation. There is not a word from beginning to end to show that he was admitted by episcopal consecration into a separate order; nor is there even so much as a hint that his peculiar and distinctive function was to be henceforth the exercise of a power to confer the priesthood. The act of the Ordination of a Bishop, if such it can be called, in the Apostolical Constitutions, is represented as being the act of the whole assembly of clergy and laity.

I merely wish to note the fact that, whilst Dr. Neale gives this rubric in his Greek editions of the Liturgy, he omits it from his English translation. Why was this?

exclusively appropriated to the episcopal order.¹ This is most significant.

Other points of interest connected with this liturgy are—

1. A great distinction is made between the young children (*παιδιά*) of catechumens, and the little children of the faithful. The former are first blessed by the president, and then retire before the offering of the great oblation. The others remain until the end, under the care of a deacon, and partake of the body and blood of the Lord. It would be difficult not to trace in this a very early recognition of the practice of baptizing the young children of Christian believers. It is as nearly certain as anything can be, that these ‘little children’ included infants, for such have always been, and still are, admitted to communion in the eastern Church; and being communicants, they must have been previously baptized.²

2. After baptism there appears to have still been, in the case of adults—for it could scarcely have been enforced with very young children—a certain period of probation between baptism and admission to communion. Those who had been ‘illuminated,’ are blessed after the catechumens, but before consecration. This points to an

¹ Thus he is called the High Priest (*ἀρχιερεύς*), pages 94–96. I give the references to Neale's smaller edition of the Prim. Liturgies. Again, the bishop, *ὁ ἐπίσκοπος*, p. 95, must be the celebrant, the bishop *par excellence*. So, too, when the bishop, that is the celebrant, stands at the altar to receive the bread and wine from the deacons, p. 96, the presbyters, who stand by him on his right hand and on his left, must, one would think, be the bishops of the opening rubric.

² Ἐφ' ἐκίστῳ δὲ αὐτῶν, sc. κατηχομένων, ᾧν ὁ διάκονος προσφωνεῖ, ὡς προείπομεν, λεγέτω ὁ λαὸς· Κύριε ἐλέησον, καὶ πρὸ παντῶν τὰ παιδία.—P. 88. And again, long after the catechumens have departed, Τὰ παιδία δὲ στηκέτωσαν πρὸς τῷ βήματι. The former rubric may of course be a direction for the little children to pray, especially for the catechumens; but this does not seem so probable as the explanation I have suggested.

intermediate rite called ‘the Seal of the Lord,’ or confirmation, coming between baptism and admission to full Christian privileges.¹

3. The very early use of the sign of the cross. It is made by the celebrant over the people in giving them the blessing.²

4. The ritual direction for washing the priests’ hands, with the very curious symbolical reason given for it, in connection with the ‘faithful departed’—that it is ‘to signify the purity of the souls which are resting in God.’³

5. The celebrant wears a special vestment, which is called bright, or shining, whatever that may mean.⁴

6. In the pre-anaphoral prayer for the clergy, three only are commemorated by name—‘Let us pray for James, our bishop, and his parishes: let us pray for Bishop Clement, and his parishes: let us pray for Euodius our bishop, and his parishes.’ These bishops must be James, metropolitan of Jerusalem and her daughter churches, Clement of Rome, and Euodius, first bishop of Antioch after St. Peter. These cities were, with Alexandria, unquestionably the four chief centres of Christianity as then existing. The careful reader will not fail to note that SS. James and Euodius are called ‘our bishops,’ St. Clement is termed simply ‘Bishop Clement.’ For the omission of Alexandria it seems hard to account upon any other supposition than its special subordination to the Church of Rome, several traces of which we find in history.⁵

¹ P. 90. ² Cf. the equally ancient Liturgy of St. Mark, p. 12.

³ Εἰς τὴν ὑποδιάκονος διδόντων ἀπόνειψιν χειρῶν τοῖς ἱερεῦσι, σύμβολον καθαρότητος ψυχῶν Θεῶ ἀνακειμένων. ψ. θ. ἁ. is a common technical expression for the souls of the faithful departed.

⁴ P. 96, ὁ ἀρχιερεὺς λαμπρὰν ἐσθῆτα μετενδύς.

⁵ See some of the instances collected in the volume of *Historical Tracts of St. Athanasius*; *Oxford Lib. of the Fathers*, p. 56. As early

7. It is not a little curious to observe what we may perhaps call the independent manner in which the liturgy makes use of theological language, independent, that is to say, of quotation from our present canonical scriptures, as if to its compiler were still unclosed the great fount of primitive and apostolic tradition.

To give two instances: 1. St. Paul, in the Epistle to the Ephesians, speaks, in all probability of Christ, as Him, 'of whom the whole family in heaven and earth is named,' and this has been the usual application of the words; but in the liturgy, the expression is certainly applied to God the Father.¹ 2. St. Paul in his First Epistle to the Corinthians uses the following words as part of his own description of the institution of the holy Eucharist: 'For as oft as ye eat this bread, and drink this cup ye show the Lord's death until He come.' In the liturgy, in the part which we call the Consecration Prayer, similar words are used as spoken by Christ Himself at the Last Supper: 'For as oft as ye do eat this bread, and drink this cup, ye do show forth *My* death until I come.'²

8. In the last place, this liturgy makes use of a word, which, taken in the connection in which it is found, has

as the time of Dionysius, bishop of Alexandria in the third century, an appeal was carried to Rome against him.

Ülzen, the most recent editor of the Apostolical Constitutions, gives 'Ἀννιᾶρον, who was the immediate successor of St. Mark at Alexandria, as a various MS. reading for Εὐδοκίον. In Messrs. Clark's Ante-Nicene Library, 'Bishop Annianus and his parishes' are added after Bishop Eudodius; but this *addition* seems to be a mistake. At least I cannot find MS. authority for it.

¹ Cf. p. 97 of the Lit. with Eph. iii. 15 . . . ἐξ οὗ πᾶσα πατρία . . . ὁρμαζεται. The nearest antecedent to οὗ is Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ; to it, therefore, it most naturally refers.

² Cf. p. 103 with 1 Cor. xi. 26.

a most important bearing upon Christendom's unhappy divisions.

It is well known that the existing liturgies of the Orthodox Greek Church contain a prayer, or invocation, for the descent of the Holy Ghost upon the *consecrated* elements, that He may make them to become the body and blood of Christ.¹ The Latin Church has always held strongly that the bread and wine become the Lord's body and blood by virtue of the words of institution, and therefore at and from the very moment of consecration.

So powerful has this feeling been in the West, that eminent liturgiologists are of opinion, that the Roman missal contained originally a prayer for the descent of the Holy Ghost after consecration, similar in character to those still in use in the East, and that it was removed on account of its supposed inconsistency with the Western theory of consecration. The charge of heresy has been very freely, though most needlessly, brought forward by each side against the other. The root of the difference lies in the impossibility of expressing adequately and with perfect accuracy in the language of earth and time, things which are conversant with eternity. But the Liturgy of St. Clement might have furnished both sides with a middle term, in which they could agree, and an expression which could scarcely be charged with heterodoxy by the most zealous of the Latins. The Clementine canon of the mass does not pray, like that of St. James, that the Holy Ghost would *make* the bread the body of Christ, and the wine His blood; but supplicates the Father 'for the honour of Thy Christ, favourably to regard these gifts, and to send down Thy Holy Ghost upon this sacrifice, the

¹ Thus in the Liturgy of St. James, p. 64, after consecration, ἔξαπό-
στειλον ἐπὶ τὰ προκειμένα ἑῶρα ταῦτα τὸ Πνεῦμα σου τὸ πανάγιον . .
ἵνα ποιήσῃ τὸν μὲν ἄρτον τοῦτον σῶμα ἁγίον τοῦ Χριστοῦ σου.

witness of the sufferings of the Lord Jesus, that He may manifest ¹ this bread to be the body of Thy Christ, and this cup to be the blood of Thy Christ, in order that they who receive it may be strengthened unto godliness, may obtain remission of sins, may be delivered from the devil and his deceits, may be filled with the Holy Ghost, be made worthy of Thy Christ, and become partakers of everlasting life.' To the use of this expression, 'may manifest,' we may suppose on the one hand, no oriental would object, since it occurs in the Apostolical Constitutions, which the Eastern Church receives and reverences; and that the Western Church, on the other, would not regard it as heretical, seeing that it may fairly be taken to refer to the application by the Holy Spirit 'of the grace of the sacrament,' to the soul of the faithful communicant.

Translations are added of some portions of this liturgy for the sake of their most beautiful language, and their noble thoughts.

The first is the supplication on behalf of the *energumens*, occurring near the commencement. '*After the catechumens have departed in peace, the deacon shall say*—Let those who are possessed with unclean spirits make their supplication. Let us all pray earnestly for them, that the loving God, through Christ, would rebuke the unclean and wicked spirits, and rescue these His suppliants from the dominion of the enemy, that He who rebuked the legion of demons, and the devil, the author of mischief, would Himself rebuke even now the impious apostates, and deliver His own workmanship from their power, and cleanse the things which He hath made with great wisdom. Let us pray for them yet more earnestly,

¹ P. 104. Καὶ καταπέμψης τὸ ἅγιον σου Πνεῦμα . . . ὥπως ἀποφίγη τὸν ἄρτον τοῦτον σῶμα τοῦ Χριστοῦ σου.

Save them, O God, and lift them up by Thy power. Let the energumens bow their heads and receive the blessing. And the bishop shall pray over them saying—O Thou who didst bind the strong man, and spoiledst his goods: Thou who gavest us power over serpents, and to tread on scorpions, and on all the power of the enemy, Thou who hast delivered up to us in bonds the murderous serpent, as a sparrow to little children,¹ Thou before the face of whose power all things shudder and tremble—O Thou, who didst cause him to fall like lightning from heaven to earth, not with any local fall, but from honour to dishonour, because of his voluntary malice, Thou, whose glance drieth up the deep, and Thy rebuke melteth the mountains, and Thy truth endureth for ever; Thou, whom infants praise and sucklings bless; whom angels hymn and adore; who lookest upon the earth, and makest it tremble, who touchest the mountains and they smoke; who rebukest the sea and driest it up, and makest all its streams as a wilderness: for whom the clouds are the dust of Thy feet, who walkest upon the sea as upon a sure foundation—O only begotten God, Son of the mighty Father, rebuke the evil spirits, and deliver the works of Thine hands from the hostile spirit, for to Thee belong glory and honour and majesty, and through Thee to Thy Father in the Holy Ghost for ever. Amen.’

The next translation is that of the wonderful prayer which comes immediately after the ‘Lift up your hearts.’

And the priest shall say—‘It is very meet and right before all things to praise Thee, the only true God, who

¹ See Job xl. 24, seq. LXX. Where we translate Leviathan, the LXX has δράκων. Δήσεις δράκοντα ὥσπερ στρουθίον παιδίον. The Fathers generally explain the passage, of Christians triumphing over death, and ‘him that had the power of death.’

art before all things which are begotten, of whom the whole family in heaven and earth is named, who only art unbegotten, without beginning, who knowest neither king, nor lord, having need of nothing, the Supplier of all good, above all cause and generation, who art always and everywhere the same; from whom all things, as it were from a starting-point, came into being—for Thou art the unbeginning Knowledge, the invisible Sight, the uncreated Hearing, the untaught Wisdom—Thou art First in nature, a Law to being, Superior to all number; Thou broughtest all things into existence from non-existence, through Thy Only Begotten Son; and Him before all ages Thou didst beget, in will, and power, without a mediator, the Only Begotten Son, God the Word, Living Wisdom, the First Begotten of every creature, the Angel of Thy great Counsel, Thy High Priest, and the King and Lord of all creation both visible and invisible, who is before all things, and through whom are all things. For Thou, O everlasting God, hast made all things through Him; and through His seemly Providence Thou takest care of all things. For through Him Thou gavest them to be; through Him also Thou gavest them to prosper. O God and Father of Thine Only Begotten Son, who through Him madest before all things the cherubim and the seraphim, crowns and thrones, angels and archangels: and after all these things, madest through Him this visible universe, and all things which are therein. For Thou art He who hast placed the heaven as a curtain, and stretched it out like a tabernacle, and established the earth upon nothing, by counsel only. O Thou, who hast made fast the firmament, and hast prepared the night and the day, who leddest light out of Thy treasures, and clothedst it again with the robe of darkness, that there might be rest for all things living

and moving upon the earth ; who hast appointed the sun in the heaven to govern the day, and the moon to govern the night ; who hast enrolled the chorus of the stars in heaven for the praise of Thy majesty ; who madest water for drink and purification, the life-preserving air for breathing and transmission of sounds, through the tongue striking upon it, and the sense of hearing co-operating with it, so as to understand the words which are received, and which fall upon the ear ; Thou who madest fire for comfort in darkness, for supplying that which was needed both for warmth and for light ; Thou who hast divided the great sea from the land, and showedst one to be navigable for ships, the other to be trodden by the foot, and filledst the one with both small and great beasts, but enrichedst the other with creatures both wild and tame, crownedst it with divers kinds of plants and herbs, beautifiedst it with flowers, and storedst it with seeds ; Thou who establishedst the mighty deep, placing in it great whales ; these are the seas where the briny waters have been heaped together, but Thou hast hedged them in with gates of lightest sand ; Thou, who at one time, with the wind, liftest them up to the height of mountains, and at another, assuagest them to be like unto a plain, now making them dreadful with storms, and now quieting them with a calm, so that they may give a pleasant passage to them that sail over them in ships ; Thou that girdest the world, which was made by Thee, through Christ, with rivers, and waterest it with torrents, and givest it drink from perennial fountains, and makest it firm with mountains round about for an unshaken habitation ; Thou hast filled Thy world, and adorned it with sweet-smelling and healing plants, with many animals of divers kinds, strong and weak, some for food, and some for toil ; with the hissing of creeping

things, with the notes of many kinds of birds; Thine are the cycles of the years, the numbering of the months and days, the ordering of the seasons, the courses of the rain-bearing clouds, for the bringing forth of fruits, for the sustenance of animals; Thine the station of the winds, blowing as they are ordered, and Thine the multitude of herbs and plants. And not only hast Thou created the world, but Thou hast made man its inhabitant upon it, manifesting him to be the world of the world. For Thou saidst to Thy Wisdom, "Let us make man after our image and likeness, and let them have dominion over the fish of the sea and over the fowl of air." Wherefore Thou hast made him of a deathless soul, and a dissoluble body, the former indeed out of nothing, the latter out of the four elements; and Thou hast given him as to his soul, a reasonable discrimination, the distinction between piety and ungodliness, the knowledge of right and wrong; and according to the body, Thou hast endowed him with the fivefold gift of the senses, and the power of moving about from place to place. For Thou, O God Almighty, through Christ, plantedst Paradise eastward in Eden, adorning it with every kind of tree good for food, and broughtest him into it, as into a very glorious home; and for keeping Thy law, Thou placedst it within him, that inwardly, even within himself, he might have the seeds of divine knowledge. And when Thou broughtest him into the Paradise of delight Thou gavest him power to partake of all things, interdicting the taste of but one, and that with the hope of still better things, that if he should keep the commandment, he should receive the reward of its immortality; and when he had transgressed the commandment, and had eaten of the forbidden fruit, through the deceit of the serpent, and the advice of the woman, Thou, indeed, justly didst thrust him out of

Paradise, but in Thy goodness wouldst not suffer him wholly to perish, for he was Thy workmanship. But Thou placedst the creation under him, Thou gavest him to provide food for himself by his own labour and sweat, though it is Thou who plantest and increasest and ripenest all things. And in process of time, having given him a little rest, Thou calledst him to regeneration by the witness of an oath, having loosed the bonds of death. Thou promisedst life through the Resurrection. And not only this, but Thou increasedst those which sprang from him so as to become a countless multitude, and glorifiedst them that waited for Thee, but punishedst them that rebelled against Thee. And Thou, indeed, acceptedst the sacrifice of Abel as that of a righteous man, but rejectedst the gift of Cain, the murderer of his brother, as that of an impious man. And afterwards Thou receivedst Seth and Enoch, and Enoch Thou translatedst; for Thou art the Creator of men, the Fountain of Life, the Supplier of Want, the Giver of Laws, the Rewarder of them that keep them, the Avenger of them that transgress them. Thou broughtest the mighty Deluge upon the world, because of the multitude of the ungodly, and savedst righteous Noah from it in the ark with eight souls; and this was an end of all things which were passed, and a beginning of things to come. Thou kindledst the dreadful fire against the Pentapolis of Sodom, and turnedst the fruitful land into saltness for the wickedness of them that dwelt therein, and pluckedst righteous Lot out of the burning. For Thou art He who deliveredst Abraham from the ungodliness of his progenitors, and madest him to be the heir of the world, and manifestedst unto him Thy Christ; Thou choosedst Melchisedek to be a high priest of Thy worship; Thou establishedst Thy much-enduring servant Job to be a conqueror of the

serpent, that beginner of evil; Thou madest Isaac to be the son of the promise; Thou gavest Jacob to be the father of twelve sons, and those from them to become a multitude, and him Thou leddest into Egypt with three-score and fifteen souls; Thou, O Lord, didst not forsake Joseph, but gavest him, as a reward of the wisdom which he had from Thee, to be ruler over Egypt; Thou, too, O Lord, didst not forsake the Hebrews when they were in sore affliction under the Egyptians, because of the promises made to their fathers; for Thou didst deliver them, punishing the Egyptians. And when man had corrupted the natural law, and at one time had thought all creation to be self-existent, and at another time had honoured it more than was meet, ranking it with Thee, the God of all, Thou didst not suffer them to be deceived, but manifestedst Thy holy servant Moses, gavest through him the written law to assist the natural law, shewedst that creation was Thy work, and banishedst the deceit of a multitude of gods; Thou glorifiedst Aaron and his descendants with the honour of the priesthood; Thou chastisedst the Hebrews that sinned; Thou receivedst them that repented; Thou smotest the Egyptians with ten plagues; Thou dividedst the sea, and made the Israelites to pass through the midst of it; the Egyptians, who pursued them Thou destroyedst with the overwhelming billows; by a tree Thou madest sweet the bitter water; from the craggy rock Thou pouredst out a stream; from heaven Thou rainedst manna; quails from the air round about; Thine was the pillar of fire to give light by night, and Thine the pillar of cloud to give shade and comfort by day. Joshua Thou sentest forth Thy captain, destroyedst by him the seven nations of Canaan, smotest through Jordan, driedst up the rivers of Etham, dashedst down walls without contrivance, or hand

of man ; for all these things Thine is the glory, O Lord Almighty. The countless hosts of angels, archangels, thrones, dominions, rulers, authorities, powers, even the eternal armies, praise Thee. The cherubim and the six-winged seraphim, with twain of which they cover their feet, and with twain their heads, and with twain do fly, praise Thee, and say, together with thousands of thousands of archangels, and ten thousands of ten thousands of angels, with cries that never cease, nor are silent—*And let all the people say together* : Holy, holy, holy, Lord of Sabaoth ; heaven and earth are full of His glory, who is blessed for ever. Amen.’

This is a grand recapitulation and enumeration of the wonderful works of God in His kingdoms of nature, of providence, and of grace ; but no translation can convey more than a very faint idea of the superhuman beauty of the language in the original Greek.

Then, after this recapitulation of God’s works before the Incarnation, and following the Trisagion of the people, the liturgy proceeds in a strain of equal majesty, describing the Incarnation and its accompaniments, thus :—*‘And the priest shall say as follows* : For of a truth Thou art holy and all-holy, most high, and highly exalted for ever. And holy is Thine Only Begotten Son, our Lord and God, Jesus the Christ, who when He had been Thy minister in all things, who art His God and Father, for excellent creation, and for corresponding providence, disregarded not the lost human race, but, after the law of nature, after the exhortation of the law, after prophetic reproofs, and the ministration of the angels ; when men disregarded the natural law together with its Author, when they cast out of remembrance the flood, the fiery overthrow, the plagues of Egypt, the slaughter of the inhabitants of Palestine, and when all were well nigh about to perish,

He Himself was pleased, by Thy counsel, He the Maker of man, to become man, the Lawgiver to be under the law, the High Priest to become a victim, the Shepherd a sheep, and entirely propitiated Thee, His God and Father, and reconciled Thee¹ to the world, and freed all from the wrath which lay upon them, being made of a Virgin, made in flesh, God the Word, the Beloved Son, the First Born before all creation, according to the prophecies spoken before of Him and by Him, of the seed of David and Abraham, and of the tribe of Judah. And He who formed all things which were, was made in the womb of a Virgin, and the Fleshless became flesh, and He who was begotten eternally was born in time: He lived holily, and taught orderly, drove away every sickness and every disease from men, and did signs and wonders among the people; He partook of food and drink and sleep; who giveth meat to all who need, and filleth everything living with plenteousness; He manifested Thy name to them who knew it not; He banished ignorance, stirred up piety, fulfilled Thy will, finished the work which Thou gavest Him to do. And when He had accomplished all these things, being taken by the wicked hands of the priests, and the falsely called high priests, and the lawless people, through the treachery of him who was sick with malice, and having suffered many things at their hands, and having voluntarily submitted to every indignity, He was delivered up to Pilate the governor, and the Judge was judged, and the Saviour condemned; the Impassible was nailed to the cross; He who by nature was immortal died, and the Giver of life was buried, that He might loose

¹ Dr. Neale remarks upon this, as he calls it, unscriptural expression. Scripture speaks of 'reconciling the world to God.' Dr. Neale's meaning is tolerably evident; but surely 'independent theological language' would be a better way to speak of it, rather than unscriptural.

from suffering, and deliver from death, those for the sake of whom He became man, that He might burst the bonds of the devil, and rescue men from his deceit. And He arose from the dead on the third day, and having continued forty days with His disciples, He was received up into heaven, and sat on the right hand of God, even His Father.'

The last translation shall be the beautiful prayer with which the liturgy concludes.

'The bishop shall add the following prayer: O God Almighty, true and incomparable, who art everywhere, and in all things present, and yet existest in nothing as contained therein, who art not circumscribed by space, nor growest old with time, nor art limited by ages, nor art persuaded by eloquence, nor subject to generation, nor needest safe keeping, who art superior to corruption, unsusceptible of change, unalterable in nature, dwelling in the unapproachable light, invisible by nature, but who art known and received by all reasonable beings which seek Thee with a good will, O God of Israel, truly beholding Thee, Thou God of Thy people which believe in Christ, be propitious, and hear me for Thy name's sake, and bless those who have bent their necks to Thee, and give them the desires of their hearts, as may be expedient for them, and let none of them be rejected from Thy kingdom, but sanctify them, guard, defend, and help them, deliver them from the enemy, and from every adversary, protect their habitations, and keep them in their going out and their coming in, for Thine are glory, praise, majesty, reverence, and worship, together with Thy Son, Jesus Christ, our Lord and God and King, and with the Holy Ghost, now and for ever, and for ages of ages. Amen.'

CHAPTER III.

EARLY LEGENDS CONNECTED WITH CLEMENS ROMANUS.

WHAT may be called the legendary history of St. Clement may be divided into two parts—his life, and the acts of his martyrdom. The chief source of materials for the former is to be found in the Clementine Recognitions; of the latter, in the antiphons and responds of the Breviary. The narrative portion of the Recognitions reads very much like a romance; so much is this the case, that some critics are of opinion that it was written with that intention.

According to this singular work, Clement was born at Rome, the descendant of a noble family. His father's name was Faustinianus,¹ his mother's Matthidia.

His mother had previously given birth to twin sons, named respectively Faustus and Faustinus. When Clement was about five years old, his father's brother fell in love with his mother. To escape his wicked proposals, she told her husband that she had had a warning dream, or vision from a certain deity, that unless she left Rome with her twin sons, and remained absent for ten years, the whole family would perish miserably.

Faustinianus acceded to his wife's earnest entreaty, and she embarked in a ship for Athens with her two boys, where they were to remain to be educated. Clement was left at Rome to be a comfort to his father. After a

¹ He is called Faustinus in the Brev. Rom.

time, Faustinianus becoming uneasy at receiving neither letters nor tidings from his wife, sent special messengers to Athens to enquire what had become of her and the children, and how they fared. After tedious delays, these messengers returned, bringing word that Matthidia and her sons had never reached Athens, and that they had been unable to discover the slightest trace of them. Faustinianus continued for some years to make every possible search and enquiry without leaving Rome ; but at last, overwhelmed with grief, and urged on by a passionate desire of once more beholding his wife, to whom he was tenderly attached, he placed Clement under the care of a guardian, and went in search of her. In the meanwhile, the ship in which Matthidia was sailing, had been driven by storms far past Athens, and wrecked upon a small island called Aradus or Antaradus, off the Phœnician coast. When the ship parted, the mother, clinging to one piece of the wreck, was cast on shore ; the boys, supported upon another fragment, were seized by pirates, who had braved the fury of the storm in the hope of plunder, and were carried by them into the harbour of Cæsarea. In this city they grew up, treated at first very cruelly by their captors, who changed their names to Nicetas and Aquila, and after a time sold them to a lady of Cæsarea, a childless widow, called Justa, who brought them up as her own sons, and had them carefully educated in Greek literature and the liberal arts. At Cæsarea they met with Simon Magus, and became his disciples, being won by the charms of his philosophical system ; but they were afterwards converted to the Christian faith by St. Peter, during his stay in this city. Clement himself remained at Rome, after his father's departure, until he was verging on manhood. He had addicted himself with zeal and earnestness to the study of the

different philosophic systems, some acquaintance with which was then considered a necessary element in mental culture ; but he was unable to find rest or satisfaction in any. He was most especially anxious to find some religion or some philosophy which would furnish him with irrefragable arguments for the immortality of the soul. Whilst he was in that sceptical and uncertain frame of mind, in which we know so many of the nobler and more earnest heathens were involved at the first advent of the Christian religion, he accidentally met with St. Barnabas preaching in the streets of Rome. This was during our Lord's earthly life, just previous to His crucifixion. St. Barnabas was being ill-treated and insulted by the populace, when Clement, passing by, interposed in his behalf, and took him to his own house, where he remained for a few days, and then set out on his return to Judea. Clement, in obedience to an irresistible inward impulse, was not very long before he followed him. He settled his temporal affairs at Rome, and went to Palestine. He appears, according to the narrative of the 'Recognitions,'¹ to have

¹ It is interesting to observe that there is what one may call an entire family of early Christian writings, dating from certainly not later than the middle of the third century, which, while assigning a very high position in the Church to St. Peter, yet evidently give a decided, though undefined ecclesiastical supremacy, or jurisdiction, to St. James and the Church of Jerusalem. The famous Liturgy of St. James belongs to this Family. The so-called Clementines do so even more unmistakably. When we remember the utter destruction of Jerusalem by Adrian in 135, and the displacing of the Church of the Circumcision by a Gentile Church in the Holy City consequent upon that event, it would be difficult not to think, that the class of writings referred to, preserve a phase at least of the traditions of Apostolic times, tracing up to the action of St. James in the Council of Jerusalem. A careful study of all these scattered indications would seem to bar the claim of Rome to appeal to the *quod ab omnibus* of the Vincentian Rule.

arrived at Jerusalem very soon after our Lord's crucifixion and ascension into heaven. He especially attached himself to the Apostle Peter, whom he accompanied in his evangelistic journeys. Notably he was present with him during the celebrated discussion with Simon Magus at Cæsarea. Here, also, he met with his brothers, Faustus and Faustinus, but without recognising them under the fresh names which had been given them by the pirates. The three brothers went with St. Peter from place to place, until they came to Antaradus, in Phœnicia.¹ The 'Recognitions' abound in interesting details of St. Peter's manner of life, and the style and tenor of his conversation. If we cannot accept these as absolutely contemporary pictures of apostolic manners, they at least present us with what was the Christian ideal of them, within about a century after the death of St. John. From Antaradus, though the narrative is not very clear, Nicetas and Aquila went on to Laodicea. During their stay on this coast, Peter and Clement crossed over to the island, and while the latter was examining a very beautiful temple, for which it was famous, St. Peter entered into conversation with a poor beggar woman, whom he found upon the sea-shore, and with some pains extracted from her her history. After relating what we know about Matthidia, she described the wreck of her ship, her casting upon Aradus, her fruitless search for the bodies of her sons upon the shore, the kindness of a poor widow, who had been the wife of a sailor who had died at sea, and who now gave Matthidia a share of her hut. She related how this poor widow and herself had maintained

¹ The island was called Aradus, and a town which had been built opposite to it on the mainland, and with which it appears to have been connected by a bridge, was called Antaradus.

themselves for some years by the labour of their hands, until the former being attacked with palsy, she had been reduced to the necessity of supporting both by asking for alms of the visitors to the temple. St. Peter came to the conclusion that she must be the mother of his young companion, and thus became the means of restoring one to the other, to the inexpressible joy of both. After this, they all journeyed on together to Laodicea, Matthidia keeping close to Peter's wife, who was also of the company. Here they rejoined Aquila and Nicetas. Clement, who had heard something of the history of his brothers' shipwreck when they were young boys, began now to make further enquiries and reflections. These ended, as will have been foreseen, in the mutual *Recognition* of Matthidia and the twins.

The whole family was now reunited with the exception of the father, Faustinianus, and this was not long delayed.

At Laodicea¹ St. Peter took the three brothers down with him to the harbour, where they bathed in the sea, and after their bath, retired to a place apart for prayer. They were watched by an old man, who had the appearance and garb of a workman, who addressed them as they retired from their extemporised oratory. He entered courteously into conversation with them, but stated very decided views of his own as to the non-efficacy of prayer. 'I observed,' he says, 'without your noticing me, what you were doing. I saw you praying. Pitying your error, I waited until you came out, that I might speak with you, and instruct you not to err in an observance of this sort,

¹ The Laodicea of the 'Recognitions' must not be confounded with the better known Laodicea of Asia Minor. It is said that there were at least six towns of this name. The one which is here mentioned is probably a place in the confines of Phœnicia and Cœlo-Syria.

because there is neither any God nor any worship, neither is there any Providence in the world ; all things are done according to fortuitous chance and nativity. This I have discovered most clearly for myself. Do not err, therefore, for whether you pray or whether you do not pray, whatever your nativity contains, that shall befall you.'

This old man was Faustinianus ; and his terrible misfortunes had been the cause of his fall into such sheer atheism.

St. Peter and his unknown children entered into a discussion with him, which is very cleverly and artistically managed, and which at length results in another mutual 'recognition.' Thus the whole family are once more united, and, as is said in modern romances, 'live happy ever afterwards.' This satisfactory *dénouement* has given a title to the book. It is, of course, now quite impossible to say whether it be a romance or not. In favour of the former supposition, there is the parallel instance of the *Golden Ass* of Apuleius, an author who flourished long before the age of romances properly so called, and not very remote from the date of the Clementines. On the other side is the fact that there is nothing incredible, or even violently improbable in what is related of the adventures of St. Clement's family. Notwithstanding proverbial expressions about novels, we know that, leaving out the supernatural portions of the 'Recognitions,' far more wonderful things do happen almost every day in the history of real living persons. As, however, the narrative part of the work does not rest upon any historical basis, I have ventured to call it the legend of St. Clement's early life. The history of his middle age, of his episcopate, and his labours has been already given ; and then, in his closing years and his martyrdom, we fall once more into the domain of legends. These,

as given in the antiphons and responds of the Breviary, are very beautiful, and much more moderate than the so-called 'Acts of St. Clement.' The 'Acts' have embellished the earlier traditions which the Breviary preserves, apparently without much extraneous additional matter. And in this earlier form they may not be devoid of a substratum of fact. The traditions are given exactly as they are found in the Breviary.

The narrative portion of the fourth and fifth lections, in addition to what we know, says of St. Clement's pontificate, that 'he divided Rome into seven regions or districts, and appointed seven notaries, one to each, in order that they might carefully collect and commit to writing accounts of the sufferings and other remarkable acts of the martyrs.' This institution of his was the origin of all the western Martyrologies. It shows, too, the probable source of those little pieces of evidently authentic histories of the early saints and martyrs of the Catholic Church, which we are constantly meeting with, some of which even Gibbon speaks of with respect, but which are often mixed up with the most incredible fictions. The lection proceeds to say that Clement was banished by the Emperor Trajan to the solitude of Cherson, beyond the Black Sea, where he found two thousand Christians whom Trajan had banished previously. The rest will be best related in the words of the antiphons. The lections merely reproduce in a dry prosaic style the original and much more beautiful form of the legend.

'Let us all pray to our Lord Jesus Christ that He would open a fountain of water for His confessors.'

'Whilst holy Clement was in prayer, the Lamb of God appeared unto him. From under His feet there flows a living stream; the river of the flood thereof maketh glad the city of God. I beheld a Lamb standing upon the hill.'

‘They all cried out with one voice—O holy Clement, pray for us! that we may be made meet to receive the promises of Christ.’ ‘The Lord has not sent me to you because of my merits, but that I may become a partaker of your crowns; that we may be made meet to receive the promises of Christ.’

‘Thou, O Lord, hast given a habitation to Thy martyr Clement in the sea, after the fashion of a marble temple, prepared by angels’ hands. Thou affordest a way to the inhabitants of the land, that they may tell of Thy wondrous works. Thou, O Lord, hast given a way to Thy saints in the sea, and a path in the rivers.’

‘All the people round about believed in Christ the Lord.’

‘When he began to take his way to the sea, the people cried with a loud voice—O Lord Jesu Christ, do Thou save him! and Clement said with tears—O Father, receive my spirit.’

Comment upon these touching antiphons would only mar them. To return for a moment to the narrative of the lections: it is said that St. Clement was martyred by being cast into the sea, with an anchor about his neck, which is the reason why he is frequently represented in Christian iconography with an anchor attached. His body was afterwards translated to Rome under Pope Nicolas I., and buried in the church known as St. Clement’s. The lection concludes with a notice, from whatever source derived, exactly similar to those given of all the early Roman bishops. ‘He continued in his pontificate nine years, six months, six days. He held two ordinations in the month of December, in which he created ten presbyters, two deacons, bishops in divers places fifteen.’

CHAPTER IV.

HISTORY OF SAINT MARK—HIS GOSPEL—HIS LEGENDARY
ACTS—HIS MARTYRDOM.

ALTHOUGH the personal history of St. Mark belongs, strictly speaking, to the first century, rather than to the second, yet we shall find that some account of his life, his literary labours, and his legendary Acts, is necessary for a full understanding of the primitive organisation of the Church of Alexandria.

In investigating the history of St. Mark the Evangelist, we are immediately confronted with that curious phenomenon which may be noticed in the case of some other celebrated New Testament saints—that tradition speaks of two of the same name. There is, however, this difference. In other instances which come under our notice, very early writers have themselves given indications that they were aware of there being two apostolic men named alike, and that great confusion and uncertainty had been thereby, and even then, introduced into ecclesiastical history. In the case of St. Mark, the supposition that John Mark, the companion of Paul and Barnabas, is a different person from Mark the evangelist, the companion and interpreter of St. Peter, is for the most part a modern hypothesis. The theory that there were two Marks, appears to have been invented in order to obviate the difficulties which were felt to arise in connection with certain systems of chronology, in which St. Peter is placed at Rome, with Mark as his companion, at the

same time that Paul and Barnabas are preaching in Cyprus, A.D. 45, when the Acts of the Apostles say that they had John, that is Mark, for their minister. But as there is no real need for supposing that St. Peter came to Rome until several years after the above date, this difficulty vanishes at once.

It will be better therefore for historical purposes to assume that there is but one St. Mark.

The information which we possess concerning him, upon which we can with much confidence rely, is very scanty; but it is derived from very early sources indeed. Eusebius professes to give us, and there is no reason to suspect him of untruthfulness, the statements of Clement of Alexandria in his *Hypotyposes*, of Papias of Hierapolis, and of John the Presbyter.

He connects the compilation of St. Mark's Gospel with St. Peter's first preaching at Rome, when he followed Simon Magus thither.

'The light of godliness,' he says, 'shone so brightly in the minds of his hearers that they did not deem it sufficient to have heard once for all the unwritten doctrine of the divine annunciation, but most earnestly entreated Mark, who was a follower of Peter, to leave them in writing a memorial of the teaching which they had heard by word of mouth. And they did not desist until they had constrained him; and thus they became the cause that the Gospel according to Mark was written. It is said that when the apostle knew by the Holy Ghost what had been done, he was pleased with the zeal of the converts, and sanctioned the use of this gospel for public reading in the Christian assemblies.'¹

¹ H. E. iii. 15. As his authority for this account, he refers to Clem. Alex. and Papias.

In another passage of Eusebius, an account of the origin of St. Mark's Gospel is traced up, through Papias, to John the Presbyter. 'The Presbyter said this: that Mark, who was Peter's interpreter, wrote accurately what he remembered, though not indeed in the order in which things were done or spoken by Christ. For he had neither heard the Lord nor been a follower of his, but subsequently became, as I said, a follower of Peter, who gave instruction as it was needed by the converts, but did not profess to make what could be called an orderly arrangement of the Lord's words. Thus Mark did nothing amiss in thus writing certain things as he called them to mind. For this was his intention, not to pass by anything that he had heard, and not to set down anything falsely.'¹

This is a most important passage. It amounts to this, that all that was claimed for St. Mark's Gospel in the earliest age of the Church was, not inspiration, not absolute immunity from unintentional error, but simply and only that he wrote down with an honest intention what he remembered of St. Peter's preaching about our Blessed Lord's life and discourses.

But if we turn next to even so comparatively early a writer as St. Irenæus, and compare his extravagant remarks about the Four Gospels with the modest way in which John the Elder speaks, we perceive at once how soon ecclesiastical writers diverged from primitive simplicity. Innovation, with the best of intentions, has ever been the bane of the Catholic Church.

There is yet another account of this gospel, quoted by Eusebius from Clement of Alexandria,² in which some have thought they have observed a discrepancy with the previous accounts, for it is said that Peter neither objected

¹ Papias, quoted by Eus. H. E. iii. 39.

² H. E. vi. 14.

to the work, nor particularly urged it forward. But if this latter statement be applied, as it fairly may, to the period previous to St. Mark's beginning to write, and St. Peter's warm commendation of the completed gospel, then the discrepancy will vanish.

The statement that Mark was St. Peter's interpreter, a statement in which all antiquity concurs,¹ is also important. It ought to modify the usually received popular ideas, not as to the reality, but as to the extent of the Pentecostal gift of tongues.

That the apostles were miraculously assisted by the Holy Ghost to preach in divers languages, few Christians would feel disposed to doubt; but that the gift of tongues ever enabled them to speak and write in Ciceronian Latin, or Platonic Greek, it is not necessary to believe. There are few whose attention has not been directed to the question, who realise how very broad, to use a modern expression, are the opinions of some of the greatest of the Fathers upon what we may call the outward form or dress of Holy Scripture.

How long, for instance, would St. Jerome, if he had been an Anglican beneficed clergyman in the present day, have been allowed to retain his position after the publication of such opinions as these—that St. Peter employed St. Mark to polish his Greek style, because it was too rugged to go forth to the world as he originally wrote it, or that St. Paul employed Titus in a similar capacity, because he himself 'was not able to express worthily, or adequately, in Greek the majesty of his divine thoughts?'²

¹ Euseb. v. 8.

² 'Qui divinatorum sensuum majestatem digno non poterat eloqui Græci explicare sermone.' Epist. 150.

Whether St. Jerome was right or wrong as to his facts, one thing is certain, that he gives no countenance to later theories of inspiration.

Another discrepancy for which Irenæus has been made responsible, may be explained by the ambiguous meaning of a Greek word which he employs. 'After the departure¹ of Peter and Paul, Mark, the disciple and interpreter of Peter, himself delivered to us in writing the things which Peter preached.' Departure need not necessarily imply the death of these Apostles. It may mean their leaving Rome. Or another explanation is possible, that St. Mark wrote originally his Gospel in Latin, before St. Peter's death, and that he subsequently reproduced it in Greek. But it is scarcely necessary to observe that these explanations of contradictions or discrepancies in ancient writers are very uncertain. All that can be expected of honest criticism is, that it should give what appear to be probable, and sometimes even possible, reconciliations. Indeed there are few statements in early ecclesiastical history which are not contradicted, or apparently contradicted, by some writer or other. The history of St. Mark furnishes another notable instance of this phenomenon. We have seen how very distinctly, and upon what apparently reliable authority, Eusebius asserts that Mark the Evangelist had never companied with our Lord in the flesh. Yet Epiphanius relates of the self-same person, that he was not only a disciple of our Lord, but that he was so in the earliest days of His earthly ministry. He says that he was one of those weaker brethren who stumbled at Christ's discourse concerning His flesh and blood, preserved in the sixth chapter of St. John's Gospel, and that he forsook our Lord for a time in

¹ "Ἐξῆτος, S. Iren. in Eus. v. 8.

consequence, but was afterwards brought back by St. Peter.¹ Epiphanius gives no authority, as indeed he seldom does. But if the entire story be not a pure invention, there is no way of reconciling it with Eusebius, except by falling back upon the supposition that there were, after all, two Marks—John, sister's son to Barnabas, and Mark the Evangelist, and that it is to John Mark this story of unbelief must be referred, not to the evangelist. And this, although Epiphanius expressly relates it of the latter. Indeed he gives no intimation that he was aware of there being two Marks. If thus we reconcile Epiphanius with older writers in spite of himself, we may add that it is in favour of this explanation, that John Mark, whose mother had a house in Jerusalem, which was used for the purpose of Christian assemblies very soon after Christ's ascension, is much more likely to have been a follower of our Blessed Lord in the flesh, than the future convert and evangelist, of whose early history we should upon this hypothesis know absolutely nothing.

That St. Mark was sent by St. Peter, during one of his visits to Rome, to evangelise north-eastern Africa, there is little or no reason to doubt. If he were, as his Acts affirm, a Cyrenian Jew of Pentapolis, this mission of his will afford another instance of that seizing upon all natural advantages to aid them in preaching the gospel, of which there are such numerous examples amongst the early disciples.

It was as though they always remembered to act according to the spirit of their Lord's precept, to be 'as wise as serpents,' at the same time that they were 'harmless as doves.'

¹ Contra Hæres. tom. i. p. 428. Ed. Paris.

Eusebius further connects Mark's preaching in Egypt with what he quotes from Philo about the Therapeutæ. He says, though only on report,¹ that he first preached in

¹ H. E. ii. 16. Φᾶσι. St. Mark's perfectly authentic history, apart from the New Testament, amounts to very little more than the fact that he wrote one of the gospels.

This is sufficient to indicate that the external materials for any critical examination of the date of the second gospel are very scanty. They are confined to the extracts which Eusebius gives from much earlier writers, which have been already quoted.

To come down to modern opinions, a common German view is to compare the statements of Papias, respecting St. Matthew's and St. Mark's gospel one with the other, drawing the conclusion from this comparison, that St. Matthew wrote first a collection of our Lord's sayings (λόγια), that St. Mark made use of this collection, and added some account of His actions, but did not endeavour to throw his materials into any kind of orderly arrangement (τάξις); and that afterwards our present first and second gospels were formed from these works, with the addition of various floating traditions.

The difficulties, however, which stand in the way of this theory are very considerable.

1. After a long and careful consideration of the words of Papias, I am unable to see that he meant to draw any distinction between the plan of the two gospels; and certainly not to the effect that St. Mark's was written with less orderly arrangement (ὃν μέντοι τάξει) than that of St. Matthew. It has been perhaps somewhat too hastily assumed that 'in order' means chronological order. But there may, it is almost unnecessary to observe, be many other methods of arrangement besides a chronological one. The most natural, or at least the most simple and obvious view to take of the statement of Papias, would connect the compilation of St. Mark's gospel with St. Peter's preaching at Rome. Then the words 'writing not according to an orderly arrangement' would mean somewhat as follows: 'We do not now know in what order Peter related the history of Christ. He may have begun with the passion, and the crucifixion; after that he may have described the temptation in the wilderness, then have given some account of His miracles, and at last preached His resurrection and ascension into heaven. But St. Mark, whilst giving the substance of what St. Peter said, would not adhere to the sequence in which it had been related. He would, for instance, relate, as he has done, the temptation in the

Egypt the gospel which he had compiled, and established churches in Alexandria itself. This statement about his

wilderness before the passion. And between these two great events he would give various memorabilia of our Lord's ministry, including such miracles and parables as dwelt most upon his memory.'

These he might possibly arrange in some kind of order, according to a preconceived plan in his own mind; and yet without being very particular about it. Indeed there is no reason to suppose that he would think it a matter of importance. This, I believe, will fairly account for the words of Papias, 'not however in order.' And it is quite probable that John the Elder, whom Papias professes to quote, may have been of opinion that Mark had misplaced, chronologically speaking, many of the miracles and other events which took place between the baptism and the crucifixion.

2. The alleged statement that St. Matthew wrote only a collection of our Lord's sayings (λόγια), presents much greater difficulties. If Papias has been rightly understood by the advanced German school of criticism, it is evident that the gospel which we now possess, bearing the name of Matthew, cannot be the same as that known to Papias.

I subjoin a few reasons for doubting whether Papias has been rightly interpreted. It must be observed that the term he employed is not λόγαι, or ῥήματα Χριστοῦ, which would have been the more natural expression to use for the *words* or *sayings* of Christ; but Μαῦθαῖος Ἐβραϊδὶ διαλέκτῳ τὰ λόγια συνεγράψατο.

One may say at the outset, that there is nothing more tantalizing and perplexing than these little scraps of quotations from authors whose works have long since perished, which abound in Eusebius. If we had the work of Papias before us, and could compare the extract with the whole context, it might present the matter in a very different light.

However, the warmest thanks of all real searchers after truth are due to those often abused critics who have submitted almost every word of these ancient records, such as they are, to the most searching investigation. The unsatisfactoriness, on the other hand, with which the evidence of Papias has been treated by what may be called the Biblical Infallibilist School, is almost enough to make those who desire, above all things, to defend the essentials of Christianity, without caring for the triumphs of churches, or parties, fold their hands in despair.

When Papias, quoted by Eusebius, gives the opinion of John the Presbyter that Mark wrote a truthful history, the testimony of Papias is claimed not only for what it is worth, but arguments are built upon it that every word of St. Mark's gospel must be divinely inspired. When

preaching his own gospel is a somewhat remarkable one. It must refer to a written compilation, which he appears

St. Irenæus quotes Papias, as giving in the very words of the same John, and other personal disciples of our Lord, some parables which are not found in the gospels, we are told that testimony at third hand is worthless. Putting it concisely, this means, 'Papias is a valuable witness as to a matter of opinion, that John thought Mark wrote truthfully; he is worthless as to the question of fact, that a disciple of Christ said that such and such words were uttered by Christ. It is no wonder, that with such allies, the defenders of Christianity are sometimes almost overwhelmed at the difficulty of the task set before them.

I would suggest, then, that if Papias had meant that St. Matthew wrote merely a collection of our Lord's words, or sayings, he would have had, *τοὺς λόγους Ἰησοῦ συνέγραψατο*. *Λόγια* is a very different word. It may mean chronicles, a narrative of events of any kind. At least, *ἀνὴρ λόγιος* means a man learned in history, one who is skilled in the knowledge of chronicles. The New Testament use of the word, as well as the use in the Septuagint and Philo, is almost a technical one. In all three it is employed to denote the Old Testament Scriptures, which, beyond question, those writers held to be inspired, in a special sense peculiar to those writings only. If I could find a single trace in any author, previous to Irenæus, that this idea of special inspiration was passed on, so to say, by the primitive church, to what *we now call* the New Testament Scriptures, I should be disposed to think that what Papias meant by *λόγια* was, an inspired account of our Lord's life; but as I cannot, I am compelled to give up the idea as untenable. But there appears to be no strong reason why we should not take *λόγια* to mean simply a narrative, a record, a chronicle.

If, however, critics are of opinion that this view is untenable, and that *λόγια* is here used merely as a synonym for *λόγοι*, or some similar word, I would then suggest, that John the Presbyter, if he spoke in Greek, or Papias in translating John, if he spoke in Syriac, would employ words according to their Hebrew analogies. And the use of the Hebrew *דבר* to signify, with absolute indifference, a word, or a thing, a speech, or an event, is unquestionable.

Thus, to give an instance almost at random; the Septuagint of 1 Kings xiv. 29, has, 'Καὶ τὰ λοιπὰ τῶν λόγων Ῥοβοὰμ, καὶ πάντα ἃ ἐποίησεν, οὐκ, ἰδοὺ, ταῦτα γεγραμμένα ἐν βιβλίῳ λόγων τῶν ἡμερῶν τοῖς βασιλεῦσιν Ἰούδα; translating literally the Hebrew *דברי*. If it be thought that the first *λόγοι* refers to the words of Rehoboam, as opposed to his acts, there can at any rate be no doubt about the second *λόγοι*.

to have made a kind of text-book of Christian doctrine, and is an interesting undesigned coincidence of the very

It is simply used generically for chronicles, or annals of the events of Rehoboam's reign. The usage of the similar word *ῥῆμα* is shown still later in St. Luke ii. 15, "Ἰδωμεν τὸ ῥῆμα τοῦτο τὸ γέγονος."

3. One more point has occasioned considerable difficulty to those who believe that the first and second gospels are, in the main, the work of the authors, and written in the age to which they are usually assigned.

It is, why, if they are independent narratives of the life of Christ, does one follow the other so closely, not only in the facts related, and in the method of arrangement, but even in their language?

An explanation may perhaps be found in some words of Papias, to the effect that St. Matthew's gospel was first written and published in Hebrew, and that every one translated it into Greek, as best he could. This implies a great number of Greek translations of St. Matthew in the first century; though in the lapse of years, one finally displaced all the rest. What then would be more natural than that Mark should either have himself made this translation, or at least have been acquainted with it? And if so, it would of course have greatly influenced the form into which he threw his own gospel. Thus the shape which the second gospel finally assumed upon its publication, and reception by the Church, a reception which was very gradual, and certainly not general before the middle of the second century, at the earliest, may be considered as due to two causes—first, the Greek form of St. Matthew, secondly, the influence exercised by the author's recollections of St. Peter's preaching.

I believe that a careful examination of St. Mark's gospel would help to confirm this view, drawing it out in detail.

Thus in the account of the temptation in the wilderness, Mark may have heard Peter say, that our Lord 'was with the wild beasts' during the forty days. Remembering this little circumstance, and feeling that it was interesting, he gave it a place in his *memorabilia*, and from the *memorabilia* he transferred it to his gospel.

We are fortunately not left only to conjecture, as to the verisimilitude of such a theory. Justin Martyr, writing about the middle of the second century, speaks of James and John, the sons of Zebedee, as having their names changed by our Lord to 'sons of Thunder.' Justin says that this was written in the 'Memoirs of Christ.'¹

What work, or works, these *Memoirs* to which Justin constantly

¹ Dial. cum Tryph. c. 106

early probable date of the second gospel. Eusebius adds: 'So great was the multitude both of men and women who believed at the very outset of Mark's preaching, that Philo thought it worth his while to give a description in writing of their pursuits, their assemblies,

refers, were, we do not know. Of this only we are absolutely certain, that he did not use exclusively, probably not even mainly, our four Gospels. The words of St. Luke at the beginning of his gospel show the multitude of memoirs which were in existence when he began to write. And when we refer to Eusebius,¹ we find that, in the second century, there were collections of traditions of our Lord made by Papias, by Aristion, by John the Presbyter, and probably by many others. These works would of course contain many things which we now find in our Gospels, but related in somewhat different language. And this will show why it is the rarest thing possible, even when the apostolic fathers do cite sayings of our Lord which we have in our Gospels, to find those sayings given with verbal accuracy.

Many causes have led to our four Gospels occupying the exclusive position which, for so many ages, they have held in the regard and estimation of the whole Church of Christ; but it ought not to be overlooked, that all these co-operating causes, though providentially overruled, have nothing of a strictly supernatural character about them. And for more than a century after our Lord's resurrection, the Four Gospels stood upon exactly the same footing as any other memoirs of the same Divine Person. The *historical* evidence for those traditions of our Lord, which Papias received from the apostles and others, including what Eusebius called 'strange parables,' and doctrines of Christ, most of which are now lost, is, it must be remembered, of exactly the same kind, neither higher nor lower, stronger nor weaker, than the *historical* evidence for anything contained in the Gospels of St. Mark and St. Luke. The critical spirit which rejected, or allowed to fall into oblivion, words of Christ, because they were supposed to be unworthy of Him, or, as Eusebius says, 'too mythical,' was the growth, not of the first two centuries and a half, but of the age of Eusebius himself.

We must for ever regret that that age, whilst exercising their own right of criticism, did not preserve all these collections and memoirs for us, that we, too, might have exercised the same privilege of accepting or rejecting for ourselves.

¹ H. E. iii. 39.

their meals in common, and indeed their whole manner of life, on account of their philosophical and severe asceticism.'

Since, with the exception of the few passages in Eusebius, the substance of which has been given already, there are no further notices of St. Mark in what is really entitled to be called primitive Christian antiquity, we are obliged to turn for any further information to the Acts of his labours and martyrdom.

These Acts, considered in themselves, are of little or no historical value, but they are far from devoid of interest. They are more free than usual from those incredible legendary miracles which disfigure some lives of the saints. It seems probable that they were thrown into the shape in which we now possess them about the sixth, or seventh century; but it is certain that they contain several traditions of St. Mark's evangelistic work in Egypt, the origin of which mounts up to the second century. These are like grains of gold in the midst of the surrounding congeries of matter; and what greatly enhances their value is, that when submitted to the test of critical analysis, they will be found to furnish evidence bearing upon what it is scarcely too much to say, is the most important question of Ante-Nicene Christianity, the original constitution of the Church of Alexandria.

It will be best to give the substance of these Acts as they stand. We can then proceed to examine the testimony which they afford.

'After leaving Rome, Mark sailed first to Cyrene, the most famous city of the Libyan Pentapolis. Here he wrought many miracles, and converted a great number of the inhabitants, who burnt their idols, and cut down the groves which they had consecrated to demons. From thence he proceeded to diffuse the light of the Gospel in

the other parts of **Libya**, which were called **Marmarica** and **Ammoniacæ**. From this latter district, that is to say, from the west, he entered the **Thebais**, moving onwards gradually to lower Egypt and the Delta of the Nile. He did not at that time enter **Alexandria**, but preached in the outskirts of that greatest ancient emporium of the commerce of the world. He then returned to **Cyrene**. He appears to have waited for some clear indication of the will of God, which was vouchsafed to him at length in the form of a vision, in which the Holy Ghost bade him go and sow the seed of Truth in the city of **Alexandria**. The generous champion joyfully undertook his arduous mission. He took leave of his disciples in **Cyrene**, telling them of the command which he had received from God. They accompanied him to the vessel in which he was to embark; and upon the sea-shore, they all partook together with him of a little bread.'

'The disciples prayed to God for a blessing upon his voyage, and he, for his part, prayed that God would strengthen those who had been brought to the knowledge of His holy Name. He then set sail for **Alexandria**, where he arrived after two days, in the seventh year of the reign of **Nero**. He entered the city by the quarter called **Bennides**; and as he passed along the street the latchet of his sandal broke. A shoemaker named **Annian**, or **Annianus**, or **Ananias**, lived nigh at hand, to whom he applied to mend the broken thong. Whilst the cobbler was thus employed, he pierced himself in the hand with his awl, and cried out with pain—"Ah! my God."¹ St.

¹ Early Christian writers are fond of appealing to such common expressions in the mouths of the heathen, to prove the unity of God. Thus **Arnobius**: '*Hæc omnia circumspiciens quæ videmus, magis an sint dii ceteri dubitabit, quam in Deo cunctabitur, quem esse omnes naturaliter scimus, sive cum exclamamus, O Deus, sive cum Illum tes-*

Mark was filled with joy at this simple exclamation, for he took it as a sign that God's providence had brought about this apparently accidental meeting. He first put up a secret prayer, and then addressing himself to Annian, he spoke to him of that One only God, upon whom in his pain he had called, and of Jesus Christ, by whose power he might hope for the healing of his wound. At the same time he made a little clay with spittle, and put it upon the wound, calling upon the name of the Lord, and as soon as he had done so, the hand of Annian was made whole. Annian was astonished at this miracle, and from the outward mortified appearance of Mark he judged him to be a man of God, and using a pleasant violence, he constrained him to enter into his house to lodge there. When he had entered, he betook himself to prayer with those that were within, after which Annian set meat before him, and he did eat. Then Mark, taking occasion from the questions which were put to him, instructed him concerning the faith. And Annian believed, and was baptized with all his house. Many others also, when they had heard his teaching, and had seen the great miracles which he wrought, turned to the Lord. The number of the Christians, in a short space, grew and multiplied in a wonderful manner, and Mark established churches for them in the city.

‘The number and the holiness of those who were converted by the preaching of St. Mark caused the whole city to be stirred up against this Galilæan, who

tem Deum constituimus improborum, et quasi cernat faciem sublevamus ad cælum.’ Lib. ii. 3. See, too, Tertullian, from whom Arnobius probably borrowed the idea. Such passages are very useful in showing how wisely the primitive Church set herself to the work of converting the heathen world.

had come to put an end to the worship of their false gods. Mark perceiving that his life was in danger, felt it right to flee for a time from the rage of the persecutors ; but before he did so he appointed a bishop. It was Amnian, his first convert, upon whom his choice fell. Together with him he ordained three priests, seven deacons, and eleven other persons to serve in the lower ranks of the ministry of the Church. The names of the three priests were Melias, Sabinus, and Cerdon, of whom the first-named, and the last became bishops of Alexandria after Amnian. Mark himself returned into the Pentapolis, where he continued for the space of two years. Here he confirmed the faithful, and ordained bishops and other ministers. After this he returned to Alexandria, where his soul was filled with joy when he beheld the growth in grace of them that believed, and that their numbers were multiplied. He exhorted them afresh to perseverance in the faith, he prayed for them, and again withdrew himself.'

The history of his life does not tell us whither he now went. But it seems most probable that it was to Rome, to be present at the martyrdom of St. Peter and St. Paul. From Rome he once more came back to Alexandria, never again to leave it until he too went forth in triumph from this world, to receive a crown and a palm among the martyrs. 'The pagans were not able to endure the mighty miracles which God wrought by him, and they sought to take him, crying out that he was a sorcerer: but the Lord hid him for a season. At length, upon a certain day, whereon they celebrated the feast of their idol Serapis, certain of them, having nothing else to do, went in search of him, and they found Mark offering the Prayer of Oblation, for it was the Lord's Day. And when they had apprehended him, they placed

a cord about his neck, and dragged him along, saying that they must draw the ox to Bucolis, which was a place nigh the sea, full of rocks and precipices, where beasts were fed. From morning even until night they dragged him, until the earth was stained with his blood, and his flesh was torn from him in morsels. Nevertheless he ceased not blessing God and rendering thanks unto Him, because He had counted him worthy to suffer such things for His name's sake. And when evening was come, they cast him into prison, that they might take thought among themselves how they might put him to death. But the Lord comforted him in the night by visions, and sent His angel, who made the earth to quake, and who came unto him, and told him that his name was written in the Book of Life. After that the saint had given thanks unto God for such a benefit, and had prayed that He would not deprive him of His grace, Jesus Christ Himself appeared to him, in the same form which He had when on earth, and gave him His peace.

‘When the morning was come, the unbelievers drew him out of the prison, and dragged him along, as they had done on the day before, until at length he gave up his soul to God, and finished his testimony on the 25th day of the month of April, and, it is thought, in the year after Christ 68. His enemies, not content with taking away his life, burnt his body in a place called *the Messengers*, or *the Angels*, near to Bucolis. But a great storm of rain which came on quenched the fire, and drove them away. Then the Christians took up what remained of his body, and carried it to the place in Bucolis, where he had been wont to gather them together for prayer. There they buried it towards the east, in a place that was hewn in the rock. And

the place was nigh unto a valley where there were many tombs. And they buried him according to the customs of their country, and after that they joined in prayer.'

An interesting circumstance connected with St. Mark's place of sepulture, related by some ancient authors, both shows the extraordinary respect which was entertained for this great evangeliser of Egypt, and has some connection with that elevation of a Presbyter to occupy the patriarchal chair of Alexandria, without what is called episcopal consecration, which we shall discuss fully further on.

'There is a custom at Alexandria,' says the deacon Liberatus, 'that he who succeeds to a deceased patriarch must keep a vigil over the body of the departed, and place his right hand upon his own head; and when he is buried, he puts upon his own shoulders the pallium of blessed Mark, and after that he sits lawfully.'¹

Those who think that it was necessary that a presbyter should receive consecration from a higher order of men, called bishops, before occupying the patriarchal chair, forget that this Alexandrian practice is in exact harmony with their own favourite Old Testament analogy, according to which, upon the death of each high priest, he was succeeded by one who, if consecrated at all to the higher office, must have been ordinarily consecrated by priests of the second order.²

What would most probably strike even a superficial reader in these Acts of St. Mark is their naturalness and simplicity. Miracles, indeed, are spoken of, but what ancient history, sacred or profane, is without

¹ Ruinart, *Acta Sincera*. De S. Dionysio, Alexand. Episc.

² See this fully proved in the *History of Clemens Romanus*.

some notice of supernatural prodigies? And with the exception of the healing of Annian's trivial hurt, what the miracles were is not specified. If we compare this traditional, or legendary, history of Mark with almost any single chapter of the Acts of the Apostles, chosen at random, we shall perceive at a glance, that the supernatural element in the latter is well nigh incalculably in excess of what it is in the former. A very large admixture of the miraculous has never been a hindrance to the Catholic Church in her reception of any particular history as true and authentic. Thus we are here, as ever, brought back to the test of external evidence. The external evidence for the Acts of the Apostles having been written by a contemporary is strong; therefore the work is received as genuine history; the Acts of St. Mark, besides being interpolated, were written by we know not whom; therefore they are relegated, and rightly so, to the domain of legend. But legend, in the crucible of critical historical analysis, may sometimes be made to yield results as valuable as statements of facts, whose literal truth no one has ever for a moment thought of questioning. This we believe will be found to be the case with the Acts of St. Mark. Certainly a knowledge of the early Alexandrine Church will never be attained without a careful consideration of them.

The statement that St. Mark was the first to preach the Gospel in Egypt and Alexandria may be dismissed at once. There is no historical evidence for such an assertion. Such facts as we do possess look the other way. The Acts assign St. Mark's first entrance into the capital to the year 60. Eusebius, intending probably to speak of the same event, says that his episcopate commenced in the eighth year of Nero, or in A.D. 62. Thus if even the earliest of these two dates be taken, nearly thirty years

had elapsed since the first Pentecost; and it is simply incredible that none of the Egyptians who listened, first in scorn and derision, then in awe, and at last in faith, to the miracle of illiterate Galilæan fishermen speaking in divers languages the wonderful works of God, should not, during a generation, have made known in the ancient land of the Pharaohs, the marvels with which Judæa rang again—the good news of salvation by Christ, of which the gift of tongues was an outward sign. This legendary statement about St. Mark is merely one more instance of that law of tradition, which heaps together as many events as possible, in order to assign them all to some favourite name.

CHAPTER V.

THE PRIMITIVE CONSTITUTION OF THE CHURCH OF
ALEXANDRIA.

IN order to arrive at the truth about the constitution of the Alexandrine Church we must collect and compare together all the statements which can be found in ancient writers bearing upon the question; and although the impartial reader must judge for himself, we shall be mistaken indeed, if the evidence to show that that Christian community was, originally, not what is now called an episcopal one, be not felt to be, taken as a whole, simply overwhelming.

The first note of anything peculiar is to be found in that brief passage already quoted from Eusebius,¹ in which he says that St. Mark established *churches* in Alexandria itself. Even Tillemont, who, though bigoted, is very honest in the main, perceived something unusual in this apparently casual remark. He says² that it probably indicates that the Evangelist ‘divided the city into cantons, or parishes as we are accustomed to call them, and ordained that the Christians of each parish should meet together in a certain place, under the priest who had charge of them, so as to receive instruction in the word of God, and partake of the sacraments. Such we know was the practice of the Church of Alexandria, at least as early as the commencement of the fourth century, instead of the practice which prevailed in other cities, where the

¹ H. E. ii. 16.² Tillemont, Mem. tom. ii p. 93.

people all assembled in one place under the bishop.' Tillemont merely refers to St. Epiphanius for this latter statement.¹ When we turn to Epiphanius we find not only this, but we also find a good deal more. Epiphanius is describing the rise of Arianism. Arius was a presbyter in charge of one of these Alexandrine churches, when he began to disseminate his heresy. What he did and taught, remained undiscovered and unchecked by any one until a stand was made against him by Meletius, an ecclesiastic of the Thebais. And here comes in what is at once curious and important, as bearing upon our present inquiry. Meletius is several times called by Epiphanius, an archbishop. He speaks of him as 'Meletius the archbishop who was in Egypt,' probably to distinguish him from others of the same name elsewhere; and yet he says that 'he appeared to be subject to the archbishop Alexander of Alexandria.'² Now is it possible to fathom this deep sea of mystery? Absolute certainty is, of course, out of the question; but we may form a conjecture,—and it is this: Bishop and presbyter were

¹ Epiphan. tom. i. pp. 737, 738.

² Μελήτιος ἀπὸ Θηβαίων δοκῶν εἶναι, καὶ αὐτὸς Ἀρχιεπίσκοπος. Also Ὁ Ἀρχιεπίσκοπος Μελήτιος, ὑπὸ δὲ χεῖρα Ἀλεξάνδρου ἐδόκει εἶναι, p. 729. The Latin translation of this part of Epiphanius is more misleading than usual. It is often absolutely false. In the passage just quoted, it ignores ἐδόκει altogether, and renders 'Meletius Alexandro subjectus.' A little further on, when Epiphanius is speaking of the Deacon Athanasius, and says, ὁ δὲ θρόνος ἦν καὶ ἡ ἱερωσύνη ἑτοιμαζομένη τῷ ἐκ Θεοῦ κεκλημένῳ; and, ἐπεὶ οὖν ἐλθόντος Ἀθανασίου, καὶ κατασταθέντος, the Latin has: 'Enimvero sedes ei ac pontificatus debebatur.' And, 'Qui mox ut Alexandriam venit, et episcopus creatus est.' These are the miserable falsifications with which I am confronted the moment I turn to original documents. Whether they are intentional or not, I know not. But they are falsifications. They might make one despair of Christianity, if one had not hope, under God, in the honesty of the present age. St. Epiphan. tom. i. p. 736.

synonymous in the primitive Church we know ; and we also know that at some time during the third century they came to be appropriated, in most places, to different ecclesiastical offices. But it is probable enough that in Egypt they still remained synonymous, or perhaps even, as some have thought was originally the case universally in apostolic times, that in this one country the title of presbyter was considered a higher appellation than that of bishop. Thus Meletius, whom there is no ground for supposing to have had jurisdiction over other bishops, in the modern sense of the word, was probably called archbishop, as presiding over presbyters. And Alexander himself will be found, upon a careful collation of all the passages of Epiphanius, to be called an archbishop, not because he presided over such as Meletius, but because he bare rule over the bishops or presbyters of the district or parish churches of Alexandria, and indeed of the whole of Egypt.

The Emperor Adrian is a witness, that about the middle of the second century there were persons called bishops in Egypt. ‘They who worship Serapis are Christians, and those who are consecrated to Serapis call themselves bishops of Christ.’¹ The ignorance of Christian affairs displayed in this sentence is remarkable, even for that age ; but it seems to show that Adrian was aware of a distinction between the ordinary worshippers of Christ and His priests, or ministers ; and further, that these last were called by a name, which seemed to a heathen to be an unusual, or perhaps a peculiar one. Adrian’s words are sometimes brought forward to prove that there were at that early date bishops, technically so called, in Egypt. It is far more likely that Adrian’s ear catching the term, he inquired what was meant, and was

¹ Epist. ad Servianum Cons. ap. Vopisc. in Saturnino.

told by his heathen attendants, that this was the ordinary name of the priests of Christ in Alexandria. Some light is perhaps thrown upon Adrian's very curious confusion between Serapis and Christ by a passage of St. Epiphanius,¹ in which he enumerates several of the principal churches of Alexandria, among them, one of Serapion. It would be easy enough for anyone in the position of Adrian to confound the two names.

We come next to a direct statement in the Acts. There we read that Mark ordained one bishop and three presbyters in Alexandria, and there is no further mention of his ordaining any more bishops in Egypt, although he is said in the same Acts to have ordained bishops in Lybia and the Pentapolis.² Negatively therefore these Acts confirm the famous passage of Eutychius, that 'there were no bishops in the whole of provincial Egypt until the time of the eleventh patriarch Demetrius,' that is to say, for about 150 years. We have seen that what the Emperor Adrian says is not really opposed to this, and the same may be said with regard to those Egyptian bishops, such as Chæremon, who fled with his wife to the Arabian desert, in the time of the Decian persecution.³ Besides, this was after the patriarchate of Demetrius, who did appoint some bishops.

But this statement of Eutychius must be read in connection with another passage of his, equally famous and of even greater importance. 'Mark the Evangelist constituted twelve presbyters, with Ananias, to remain together with the patriarch, in such wise, that when the patriarchate became vacant they might choose one of the

¹ Contra Ariomanitas, Hæresis xlix., sive lxi.

² The authorities to whom Natalis Alex. refers as showing that St. Mark ordained bishops far and wide in Egypt, are not of the slightest value. They are Nicephorus, and Notker's Martyrology.

³ Eus. H. E. vi. 42.

twelve presbyters, upon whose head the remaining eleven might lay their hands, bless him, and create him patriarch; and should, after this, choose some other man to supply the place of the promoted presbyter, so that the presbytery should always consist of twelve. This constitution concerning the presbyters, namely, that they should create the patriarch from among themselves, remained in force at Alexandria until the time of the patriarch Alexander, who was of the number of the 318.¹ He forbade the presbyters in future to create the patriarch, and decreed that when the patriarch was dead, bishops should assemble to ordain his successor, who might be elected either from those twelve presbyters or from any others.' He then adds: 'From Ananias, whom Mark the Evangelist constituted patriarch of Alexandria, until the times of the patriarch Demetrius, there was no bishop in the provinces of Egypt. When he was made patriarch, he constituted three bishops. And he was the first Alexandrine patriarch who made bishops. After the death of Demetrius, Heraclas, who succeeded him, constituted three bishops.'

By making or constituting bishops where none had been before, it is probably meant that Demetrius and Heraclas appointed in some of the principal cities of Egypt one presbyter to preside permanently over his brethren, in the same way that they did themselves in the metropolis; and as all the presbyters of Egypt seem to have been called bishops down to a late period, this will account for these Egyptian bishops, in the later sense of the word, being called, as we have seen, archbishops.

Strenuous and persistent efforts have been made to shake or evade the force of this statement of Eutychius,

¹ Bishops present at the Council of Nicæa.

but it is far from easy to do so. In the first place, he was Patriarch of Alexandria himself, and however ignorant he may have been in other respects, he may fairly be supposed to have had some knowledge of the history of his own church. Then his work only professed to be a chronicle, containing the annals of the Church of Alexandria; unless therefore he invented these stories, he must have derived them from some ancient sources, extant in his own day.¹ But the supposition that he invented them cannot be entertained for a moment. Eutychius lived at a period when it was a thousand fold more probable that any one, a bishop above all, would forge history to support the theory of exclusive episcopal ordination, than that they would invent it in favour of presbyterianism. Eutychius wrote at a time when episcopal ordination had been pretty firmly established as the rule throughout the whole Christian Church for nearly six centuries. He would be perfectly aware that his statements about Alexandria would have the effect of lowering the estimation in which his Church was held by the rest of Christendom.

But the mass of collateral and incidental evidence in favour of the truth of the accounts delivered by Eutychius is very great indeed.

We have seen that the only Acts of St. Mark upon which any reliance can be placed say that he ordained, or appointed, only one bishop and three presbyters in the Alexandrine Church, and make no mention of any further ordinations in Egypt. Thus they agree so far with Eutychius. His statement of the ordination of twelve priests can be reconciled with the Acts by supposing that St. Mark ordained three presbyters at first, and afterwards increased their number to twelve.

¹ Circ. 879.

The truth of the matter is, that St. Jerome tells us the same things as Eutychius in different words. But all that this great Father says upon episcopacy and upon the ancient, or rather original and apostolic constitution of the Alexandrine, that is to say, the Egyptian Church, is of such immense importance that it will be best to give it in full. St. Jerome's testimony may, of course, be carped at here and there, but taken as a whole it will remain like a solid unshaken rock, to show that whatever other advantages the advocates of episcopacy may claim in its behalf, they can never prove it to be entitled to any exclusively divine, or even apostolic origin. It was an ordinance of the Catholic Church; and as the Catholic Church, for reasons which seemed good to her, in the plenitude of her power first created bishops, so in the same ever-abiding plenitude of authority she might, if so it seemed good and expedient to her, take them away.

St. Jerome's statements and opinions are scattered throughout his voluminous works; but in the following pages the most important of them will be found collected together. Commenting upon St. Paul's words in his Epistle to Titus—'For this cause left I thee in Crete that thou shouldst ordain presbyters in every city, if any be blameless, for a bishop must be blameless as the steward of God,' he says, 'A presbyter therefore is the same as a bishop, and before there was, through the instigation of the devil, party spirit in religion, and it was said among the people, "I am of Paul, I of Apollos, and I of Cephas," churches were governed by the common counsel of their presbyters. But afterwards, when everyone supposed that those whom he had baptized were his own, not Christ's, then it was decreed throughout the whole world that one of the

presbyters should be chosen to be set over the rest, and that to him the care of the whole Church should pertain, so that the seeds of schisms might be removed. If any one suppose that it is an opinion of my own and not the teaching of the Scriptures that bishop and presbyter are the same, and that the latter is a name of seniority, the former of an office, let him read attentively the words of the Apostle to the Philippians—‘ Paul and Timotheus, the servants of Jesus Christ, to all the saints which are in Christ Jesus, which are in Philippi, with the bishops and deacons, grace be to you and peace.’ Philippi was a single city of Macedonia. And certainly there could not be several bishops, as they are called,¹ in one city. But forasmuch as at that time they were accustomed to style the same persons bishops and presbyters, therefore he spoke without discriminating between them.’

After proving this point by several other passages of Scripture,² St. Jerome adds : ‘ This is sufficient to show that in the ancient Church, bishops and presbyters were the same ; but by degrees the care of all was committed to one person, in order that the weeds of dissensions might be rooted out. As therefore presbyters know that they are subject to him who is set over them by the custom of the Church, so also let bishops know that they are greater than presbyters *by custom* rather than *by the verity of the Lord’s disposal*, and that they ought in common to rule the church, imitating Moses, who, although he had power to govern Israel alone, yet chose seventy with whom he might judge the people.’

¹ I have no doubt in my own mind, judging from the whole context, that St. Jerome’s meaning was, ‘ as they are *now* called,’ that is, when he wrote ; but I have not so translated, for fear of being accused of bias.

² Heb. xiii. 7 ; 1 Pet. v. 1–5 ; Acts xx. 17.

It is indeed most beautiful to find how, as we study the annals of the primitive Church, the light breaks forth ever more and more clearly upon us. The mists with which later controversialists and upholders of theories have enveloped almost every subject are dispelled before the bright beams of Truth, and the Church of Christ becomes visible to us, with her fair, pure face, as she was at the beginning. All ancient writers are brought into perfect harmony with each other—the Apostles themselves, St. Ignatius of Antioch, St. Clement of Rome, Tertullian, St. Chrysostom, St. Jerome, even St. Cyprian, the traditions of particular churches, facts of history without number, which no longer require to be explained away, but fit harmoniously into the fair edifice of historical truth, all unite in testifying with accordant voice what the great doctor of the Church, St. Jerome, proclaims in the words quoted above, that episcopacy was *not* of the Lord's institution, but was a custom which grew up to take away the occasions of schism.

A great practical question arises : If after the experience of so many hundred years this custom of episcopacy be found to foster rather than repress the growth of schism, what ought to be done with such a custom? This is indeed a question for the whole Catholic Church to answer. And if ever there be such a thing as a real and free Œcumenical Council in this world of ours again it must be one in which, as at that First Council of Jerusalem, the elders or presbyters and the brethren are fully and fairly represented.

But there is more yet to be learnt from St. Jerome. He not only saw the true scriptural bearings of this most important subject, but being very well acquainted with the history of the Church of Alexandria, he has providentially left on record a passage which shows, that that

Church still retained primitive customs after they had been given up perhaps everywhere else.

Writing to Evagrius,¹ 'The Apostle,' he says, 'abundantly teaches that presbyters and bishops are the same; but what was done afterwards, that one should be chosen to be set over² the rest was done for a remedy against schism, lest everyone, seeking each his own, should rend the Church of Christ. For even at Alexandria, from the time of Mark the Evangelist until bishops Heraclas and Dionysius, the presbyters always called bishop one chosen from themselves, who was placed in the higher grade, just as the army makes an emperor, or the deacons nominate as archdeacon any one whom they know to be of industrious habits in their own body.'

How it is possible for any one, most of all for that school which professes to glory in accepting the Fathers as witnesses to the faith and practice of the primitive Church, to shut their eyes to the testimony of St. Jerome, is one of those mysteries which will probably always remain a perplexity to the student of moral philosophy. Many theories and explanations, some of them ingenious enough, have been invented with the object of endeavouring to show that Jerome meant something different from what he appears to mean. There is always need to be upon our guard, when we are told that ancient writers require explanation in places where their grammatical construction is obvious. Among other things, we are gravely told that St. Jerome could not mean what he said, when he asserted that bishops were identical with presbyters in the primitive Church, because he says

¹ Epist. 85.

² *Præponeretur*. I have translated it rather too strongly by 'set over.'

afterwards : ‘What is there which a bishop does, except ordination, which a presbyter may not do?’¹ The answer to this is obvious. St. Jerome in this last passage is not writing history; he is not saying what presbyters could, or could not do at the beginning of the Church; he merely says that even then, after all the innovations which had taken place—even then, at the close of the fourth century after Christ, the only difference between a bishop and a presbyter was, that it was not lawful for the latter to ordain. And this no one ever thought of disputing. Every moderately informed person in his day knew that innovating bishops, such as Alexander, and innovating Councils, such as Ancyra, had taken away the rights of the presbytery. And as the whole Church appeared to acquiesce in the loss of freedom for the sake of peace, there was nothing left for such writers as St. Jerome to do, except to call attention to the *original* identity of bishops and priests.

The early constitution of the Alexandrian Church is also sufficiently clear, but modern writers think it requires explanation. In order therefore to harmonise facts with theories, several methods of elucidation have been proposed. Two have found especial favour. The first is, that St. Jerome and Eutychius were speaking, not of the consecration, but merely of the election of the patriarch of Alexandria, and that after he had been elected by the presbyteral college, bishops were brought in from somewhere or other—for the advocates of this theory are

¹ ‘Quid enim facit, excepta ordinatione, episcopus, quod presbyter non faciat?’ It is difficult to translate these words without giving them a slight bias either on one side or the other; but the more they are studied, both in themselves and with their context, the more clearly it will be seen how less than nothing they make in favour of the advocates of the divine right of episcopacy.

not very clear from whence—to ordain him. The amply sufficient answer to this is, that the election of a bishop by presbyters was not such a very unusual event in the fourth century, that St. Jerome should go out of his way to point out that it had been the custom in Egypt about a century previous. It must be remembered that St. Jerome felt it a part of his mission to put down episcopal and prelatie pride, and to recall men's minds to the original constitution of the Church; and this being the case, he could have found abundant evidence much nearer at hand, if he had only wanted to show that priests could elect their bishops.

A second supposition is, that this celebrated Alexandrian college was really an episcopal one, consisting of thirteen bishops, with the patriarch at their head.

To this hypothesis it may be replied—first, that it is a pure conjecture, unsupported by a shadow of proof, a tittle of evidence. And secondly, that if it had been an episcopal college, it must at some period or other have ceased to be so, and have become presbyteral. And this change could only have been accomplished by forbidding that the fresh members, as from time to time they were incorporated, should receive the episcopal character, as their predecessors had done. And this transitional state must have occupied a considerable period of time, during which some members of the college were bishops, others presbyters. The idea is too absurd to need serious refutation. There is no intimation in any writer of such a state of things. Nor is it likely that any power, short of a decree of a general council, would have coerced this college of bishops to deprive themselves of a character which had been bestowed upon them by their great and revered founder, the Evangelist St. Mark. Such an idea is, moreover, opposed to the direct statement

of Eutychius, who says that Alexander forbade the presbyters in future to create the patriarch, though he still allowed them to elect him, and decreed that when elected, bishops should assemble to consecrate him. It is needless to observe that if it had been an episcopal college, the members would have consecrated the patriarch themselves, or rather he would in most cases have been one of their own body, and therefore would have needed no episcopal consecration, being a bishop already. Such are some of the absurdities into which men are forced who will not see what St. Jerome says over and over again, that bishop and presbyter were identical terms in the primitive Church, and that there can be no essential difference, or difference of order, strictly so called, between the two.

On the other hand, if we once recognise the simple fact that, during the third century, the patriarchs of Alexandria gradually altered the original constitution of their Church, and brought it into conformity with the practice of the rest of the Church Catholic, which about A.D. 250 was assuming a rigidly episcopal form, then all becomes clear, simple, and straightforward; explanations so called are unneeded, paradoxes vanish, and historical nebulous mists melt away before the keen, searching glance of honest criticism.

For indeed the proof of the nature of the original constitution of the Alexandrian Church is *ex' abundanti*. The very fact of its peculiarities attracted attention; and whatever modern writers may assert to the contrary, ancient authors give no countenance to the theory that no alterations have taken place in the Church of Christ. These changes, both in the way of loss and of accretion, have been going on since the times of the Apostles themselves. And the agencies which led to

them were in as active operation in the first three centuries as they have been in any subsequent period. Early writers were well aware of these motive forces, and of the organic changes which they produced; and they took no inconsiderable interest in examining and investigating them.¹

Thus a writer of the fourth century, who passes under the name of Ambrosiaster, and whose writings are usually bound up with those of St. Ambrose, has a remarkable and interesting passage upon the changes which had taken place up to his day.²

If such passages were estimated at their true worth, they would be printed in letters of gold, and dispersed throughout Christendom, for they are the very charters and muniments of the Church's original and essential freedom.

¹ An overlooked passage of St. Cyprian shows that he was perfectly aware that the general rules which obtained in most places, regulating the election and appointment of the ministers of the Church, were not absolutely universal. 'Propter quod diligenter de traditione divina et apostolica observatione servandum est et tenendum, quod apud nos quoque et fere per provincias universas tenetur, ut ad ordinationes rite celebrandas ad eam plebem, cui prepositus ordinatur, episcopi ejusdem provinciæ proximi quique convenient, et episcopus deligatur plebe presente.' Epist. lxxvii. St. Cyprian's use of the word *jère*, is to my mind conclusive evidence that, whilst claiming apostolic authority for the usages of his own Church, he was well acquainted with the different custom of the Church of Alexandria, and knew that it could equally claim apostolic origin.

Again, let any scholar, who has no prejudices one way or the other, read St. Cyprian's Ep. lix. § 7, with special reference to the passage which contains the words, 'unus in ecclesia *ad tempus* sacerdos,' and I should not have a moment's doubt as to what his judgment of Cyprian's theory would be.

² If this writer were, as some learned men suppose, a deacon of the Roman Church, named Hilary, his testimony is still more valuable, for whilst asserting the original absolute identity of bishops and priests, he speaks strongly of the immense difference between priests and deacons.

He is commenting upon the eleventh and twelfth verses of the fourth chapter of St. Paul's Epistle to the Ephesians—'He gave some apostles,' &c. 'Bishops,' he says, 'are apostles; prophets are expounders of the Scriptures, although at the very beginning there were prophets like Agabus, and the four virgins who prophesied, as we are told in the Acts of the Apostles; but now interpreters are called prophets; evangelists are deacons, such as was Philip; for though they are not priests, yet may they preach the Gospel without a fixed see,¹ just as blessed Stephen and the before-mentioned Philip did. Pastors are readers, who feed the listening people by reading to them the word of God; masters or teachers are exorcists, because they repress and chastise those who are unquiet in the Church, or because they are accustomed to imbue with learning the minds of children, which is indeed a custom of the Jews, whose tradition has passed over to us, though it has become obsolete through neglect.² Amongst these, he who, on account of unlocking the hidden meaning of Scripture, especially he, who bringing forth the words of

¹ This expression, speaking of evangelists as ministers who preached without a fixed see, seems to explain a passage which the learned Tillemont found a great *crux* in the Acts of St. Mark. 'Ubi (in Ægypto) eum (Marcum) Evangelistam sancti Canones Catholicæ et Apostolicæ Ecclesiæ decreverunt.' It apparently means to state that St. Mark was unlike other primitive evangelists in becoming the recognized founder and head of a particular Church, that of Alexandria. The fact that Mark himself, who certainly did not hold any higher rank in the Apostolic Church than that of one of the seventy disciples, in other words, of presbyter, or elder, yet ordained other presbyters, is a proof that presbyters had the power of ordination. If there were any truth in the episcopal theory, that bishops have succeeded in the place of the apostles, presbyters of the seventy elders, St. Mark ought to have been ordained bishop, before he could himself ordain. But all antiquity testifies that Mark was never anything higher than a presbyter.

² St. Luke, i. 4, seems clearly to refer to such a system of catechetical instruction for children.

eternal hope, is said to prophesy, is understood to be the greatest after the bishop. This order is, at present, the presbyterate. For all orders are in the bishop,¹ for he is the first priest, that is, the prince of the priests. He is prophet and evangelist, and in him are fulfilled the other offices of the Church in ministering to the faithful. Now we must understand that after churches were constituted in all places, and offices appointed, matters were arranged differently from what they were at the beginning. For at first all taught, and all baptized on whatever days, and at whatever times there might be occasion. Philip made no inquiry what day or time it was when he baptized the eunuch; he interposed no fast. Paul and Silas did not defer to any particular season the baptism of the keeper of the prison. Peter neither had deacons, nor made any question about the day when he baptized Cornelius with all his house. As yet, seven deacons only had been ordained.

‘In order therefore that the people might increase and be multiplied, it was allowed to all at the beginning to preach the Gospel, to baptize, and expound the Scriptures in the Church; but when the Church embraced all places, assemblies were constituted, and rulers and other officers appointed in the churches, that no one of the clergy who was not set apart to it, should dare to take an office which he knew was not entrusted or conceded to him. Thus the Church began to be governed by a different order and dispensation, because, if all had the same powers, the state of things would not be according to reason, and those powers would appear common and worthless.

¹ Some MSS. read ‘in Christo.’ I have not, it will be seen, followed this reading; because I wished in this case, as I believe I have done always, to give every possible advantage to the statement of the argument for episcopacy.

Hence therefore it is, that at present deacons do not preach among the people, ordinary clerics or laymen do not baptize, nor are believers admitted to that sacrament on any ordinary day, unless they are sick. Thus it is, that the apostolic writings do not agree in every particular with the ordination¹ which now is in the Church, for these writings were composed at the very commencement. St. Paul calls Timothy a bishop, who had been created by himself a presbyter; for the first presbyters were called bishops in such a manner that when one departed, the next in order succeeded him. In a word, the presbyters of Egypt confirm if a bishop be not present. But because presbyters, next in order, began to be found unworthy of occupying the chief place, the custom was changed; a Council providing that merit, not order,² should make a bishop, and that he should be appointed by the judgment of many priests, lest one unworthy should occupy the office, and become a stumbling-block to many. In the time of the law, men were born priests, of the race of Aaron the Levite, but now all are of the sacerdotal race, according to the saying of the apostle Peter—"Ye are a royal and priestly race"—a priest therefore can be made from the people.'³

Yet one more quotation must be given, to show how nearly the Church of Alexandria conformed to the apostolic and primitive model. It is from a writer of the fourth century, whose works are usually included in those of St. Augustine. He is by some supposed to be the same as the Sardinian Hilary just referred to, who passes under the name of Ambrosiaster. There is,

¹ 'Ordinationi, quæ nunc est in ecclesia.'

² 'Ordo'; the context shows that order, or place in succession, is meant.

³ Edit. Abbé Migne, pp. 241, 242.

however, but little evidence for such a supposition, and it is more probable that he was an African ecclesiastic, a contemporary of St. Augustine, and that his '*Questiones*,' as his work is called, was bound up with those of the great Bishop of Hippo by some transcriber, merely for the sake of convenience.

'The higher order,' says the writer, 'contains within itself and by itself the inferior order. For a presbyter exercises the office of a deacon, of an exorcist, and of a reader. But the Apostle Paul proves that a presbyter is to be understood to be a bishop, when he instructs Timothy, whom he had ordained presbyter, what kind of person he ought to make a bishop. For what indeed is a bishop except the first presbyter, the chief priest? And in short, the bishop calls presbyters nothing else but his com-presbyters, his fellow-priests. Does a bishop call the lower ministers his fellow-deacons? Not so; ¹ because they are far inferior; and it would not be right to call a chief secretary a judge.² For in Alexandria, and throughout the whole of Egypt, if a bishop be absent, a presbyter consecrates.'³ And the same writer says else-

¹ This is a mistake. There are a few instances to be found of bishops calling deacons their fellow-deacons; but the general argument is not affected, as it would be, if the whole proof of the identity, and original and substantial equality of bishops and presbyters rested upon the former calling the latter their com-presbyters. This is a very slight and unimportant item in the immense weight and mass of evidence.

² 'Turpe est judicem dicere primicerium.'

³ Ex Authore Quæst. V. et N. T. inter Opera S. Aug. Quæst. ci. 'Presbyter consecrat.' It may be a question what is meant by this. We have seen that Ambrosiaster says, that the priests of Egypt were accustomed, in the absence of the bishop, *consignare*, that is, to confirm; *consecrare* seems to mean something more than this. In later technical ecclesiastical Latin, 'to consecrate,' is applied almost exclusively to the ordination of bishops and priests, and the consecration of churches

where—‘No one can execute a priest’s function who is not a priest.’¹

Error is long-lived and dies hard; but it may perhaps be hoped, that after this nothing further will be heard of bishops being accounted a superior order to priests, upon any higher ground than that of a supposed convenient and profitable ecclesiastical arrangement.

We have now traced the matter from the beginning. We have seen the light which is shed upon early church history. We can note the order and harmony which is introduced by a candid and unprejudiced statement of facts, in a matter where baseless theories had produced a confusion not many degrees removed from absolute chaos. We have seen that episcopacy grew up by slow degrees in the Church, until it reached the intolerable height of tyranny which it sometimes assumed in the middle ages, and the permanent expression of which is retained in the later canon law. We may see that a modified presidency of the council of the elders, or chief ministers of a church, where there were many, as in a city or large town, was introduced by saintly men, with the best of intentions, as a remedy against schism and division, possible or actual.

and altars; and both these functions were forbidden by the canon law to ordinary presbyters, or priests of the second order. The probability therefore is, that the author of the *Quæstiones* meant to say, that in Egypt, presbyters in the bishop’s absence did both, that is, ordained and consecrated.

Of the advancement by the famous Paphuntius, monk and presbyter, of the desert of Scete in Egypt, of his disciple Daniel, first to the diaconate, then to the priesthood, there is a clear and circumstantial account in Cassian (Collat. iv. cap. 1). To say, as some writers do, that Paphuntius did not himself make Daniel a deacon, or priest, but presented him to bishops for ordination, is to compile history in what may be designated the imaginative style.

¹ Quæst. xlvii. ‘Sacerdotis vicem agere non potest, qui non est sacerdos.’

At the same time this invention of episcopacy was the work of individuals. It cannot be said, or at least if said it cannot be proved, that this institution received the sanction of the Catholic Church, speaking of her as a corporate whole, until the middle of the third century. And though, from that time onwards, there was a growing feeling that it was against the canons or rules of the church, as received in most places, for presbyters to ordain, yet, if anything could be clearer than light, this would be, that it never appears to so much as have entered into anyone's mind for a century or two afterwards, that the prohibition was anything else than a part of ecclesiastical discipline, or that it stood, in fact, upon any other ground, either higher or lower, than the prohibition, for instance, which forbade Orders to be conferred upon a man who had received clinic baptism.

The history of the Alexandrian Church is a remarkable instance to show the unwisdom of individuals, however high their station, or pure their intentions, taking upon themselves to introduce changes into even the outward constitution of the Church of Jesus Christ. If changes are made, they must be made by the whole body, to which alone, when acting in a corporate capacity, is the Divine Spirit of Wisdom and the gift of absolute infallibility and inerrancy promised. There is no particular reason to doubt the conscientiousness of the innovating patriarchs of Alexandria, such as Heraclas and the rest. These ecclesiastical chiefs were men of great learning and of wide information; and we may fairly suppose that, looking abroad over the Catholic Church of their own generation, they saw that there was a want of outward uniformity between it, and the Church over which they presided. They thought, doubtless, that in undertaking to reduce the Church of Egypt to uniformity they

were doing a good work. Alas for their restless, mistaken zeal! That church, which all history testifies to have been most singularly blessed above other churches with tranquillity within and peace without, which had gone on lengthening her cords and strengthening her stakes, which had fulfilled the wonderful prophecies of Isaiah—‘that five cities in the land of Egypt should speak the language of Canaan, and one should be called the City of Salvation,’¹ and that there should ‘be an altar to the Lord in the midst of the land of Egypt, and a pillar at the border thereof to the Lord;’ that noble church of learning, of saintliness and peace, became in the fourth century, after the innovations had been made, after the reduction to uniformity had been accomplished, a very nest and seed-plot of heresy, a very Babel of confusion, a very native home of pride and all corruption. And so it went on, until that once glorious church was swept as with the besom of destruction, her candlestick removed out of its place, and she became, as now we see her, represented by a few miserable, ignorant Copts, crouching beneath the lash of their Mahometan masters, and to whose most bitter cup of woe the rest of their Christian brethren, throughout the world, add the last dregs, by calling them heretics. What a warning to all who bear the Christian name, if they would but heed! History must be a study which is something worse than useless if Christendom will not apply a warning to herself, taken from the fate of the Church of Alexandria.

If ever the history of Arianism comes to be written with perfect impartiality, tracing it to its roots, it will then be seen that two things alone rendered it possible for that heresy to assume the gigantic, world-wide pro-

¹ Seq. LXX.

portions which it did; these were the changes which had been previously introduced into the constitution of the Church of Alexandria, and the cruel persecution of the Meletians by the patriarch Alexander, and, I grieve to add, for it is almost the solitary stain upon his otherwise spotless fame, but the truth must be spoken, by the glorious Athanasius himself.¹

That without these two founts of evil an Arius might have risen up to trouble Israel, locally and for a time, we may safely grant; but that ‘the world should have suddenly awoke, and found itself Arian,’ that some of the most numerous Councils on record should have framed and subscribed semi-Arian creeds, that heaven and earth should have been thrown into confusion, and that the dissensions and hatreds which were thereby introduced into the whole framework even of civil society, and which led ultimately, by no dark or doubtful paths

¹ For the evidence of Alexander’s persecution of the Meletians, see an unexceptionable witness for such a fact, St. Epiphanius, tom. i. p. 720: Ἦν δὲ ὁ μακαρίτης Ἀλέξανδρος ζῆλον ἀνειληφώς κατὰ τοῦ σχίσματος τῆς ἐκκλησίας παντῇ τοῖς ἰδίᾳ συναγόντας ὑπὸ δὲ τοῦ Μελητίου ὑπολειφθέντας, ἐδόκει ταρασσεν τε καὶ συνέχειν, βιάζεσθαι τε, κ.τ.λ. And for Athanasius, p. 722, where he is said to have treated the Meletians with mildness at first, hoping by that means to bring them back to unity, but when he found this fail, he, too, could not restrain his hand from persecution. I allow what I have said in the text about St. Athanasius to stand as I wrote it some time ago. Honesty, however, compels me to add, that my faith in him has since then been grievously shaken by comparing the statements of Philostorgius with the admissions of Athanasius’ own friends and partisans. That there was *something* irregular about the way in which Athanasius succeeded to the old patriarchal chair of St. Mark, I do not see how any one can doubt. What that irregularity was will probably now never be known on earth. But I strongly suspect that it was closely connected with the changes which were being at that time forced upon the Alexandrian Church, to bring its government and organisation into conformity with the rest of Christendom.

to the devastation of the fairest provinces of the Roman Empire, and finally to the destruction of the empire itself, should, independently of these baleful influences, have arisen, could by no human possibility have ever been.

There are various indications tending to show, that after the middle of the fourth century, the peculiar customs of the Alexandrian patriarchate, which were then fast dying out, were viewed with much interest by ecclesiastical writers in other places. To this effect is that passage of Socrates, in which he gives an account of some of the different usages which prevailed in various places, with which he had been himself struck.¹

Περὶ δὲ συναξέων ἕτερα τοιαῦτα· τῶν γὰρ πανταχοῦ τῆς οἰκουμένης ἐκκλησιῶν, ἐν ἡμέρᾳ σαββάτων κατὰ πᾶσαν ἐβδομάδος περίοδον ἐπιτελουσὼν τὰ μυστήρια, οἱ ἐν Ἀλεξανδρείᾳ καὶ οἱ ἐν Ῥώμῃ, ἕκ τινος ἀρχαίας παραδόσεως τοῦτο ποιεῖν παρητήσαντο. Αἰγύπτιοι δὲ γείτονες ὄντες Ἀλεξανδρέων, καὶ οἱ τὸν Θηβαίδα οἰκοῦντες ἐν σαββάτῳ μὲν ποιοῦνται συνάξεις, οὐκ ὡς ἔθος δὲ Χριστιάνοις, τῶν μυστηρίων δὲ μεταλαμβάνουσι· μετὰ γὰρ τὸ εὐωχηθῆναι, καὶ παντοίων ἔδεσμάτων ἐμφορηθῆναι, περὶ ἑσπέραν προσφέροντες τῶν μυστηρίων μεταλαμβάνουσι. Then, after mentioning some other customs, he proceeds, Ἐν τῇ αὐτῇ δὲ Ἀλεξανδρείᾳ ἀναγνῶσται καὶ ὑποβόλεις ἀδιάφορον, εἴτε κατηχούμενοί εἰσι, εἴτε πιστοί.

It certainly gives a shock to preconceived ideas to find, that it was still the custom in some parts of Egypt, to celebrate the Holy Eucharist in the evening, after the worshippers had banqueted, and filled themselves full of all kinds of food; and that it was considered a matter of indifference whether readers, an important clerical body in the early Church, were baptized Christians or not. The whole tone of Socrates in relating these things, shows how greatly he was shocked at such laxity. He goes so far as to call it 'unchristian.' It is easy to see how lightly he would have regarded, in comparison, such a practice as presbyteral ordination. In fact, to endeavour to maintain that presbyters never ordained in the early Church, is not only contrary to fact, but it implies a misconception of the whole tone and spirit and feeling of those ages.

Many things which we consider of the last importance they regarded as the merest trifles; some things which most moderns would view

¹ H. E. lib. v. c. 22.

CHAPTER VI.

THE LITURGY OF SAINT MARK.

A HISTORY of St. Mark would be incomplete without some notice of the Liturgy which bears his name.

These ancient Greek Liturgies have, by one party in the Church, been treated with scarcely sufficient respect ; and by others they have been referred to the very cradle of Christianity. The truth lies somewhere between the two extremes, and their proper position can only be determined by a careful and impartial analysis.

As an instance of the former method of regarding them, the learned Tillemont may be mentioned, who, treating many subjects exhaustively, thus dismisses the Liturgy of St. Mark. ‘The Copts believe that St. Mark was the author of a Liturgy, which we possess, bearing his name. But although Nicetas the Paphlagonian seems to attribute it to him, Balsamon has not hesitated to reject

with perfect indifference, they regarded as questions of life and death.

The Egyptian customs for which we have quoted Socrates, he calls ancient ones. He then proceeds to give an instance of a comparatively modern practice. ‘At Alexandria, presbyters do not preach. This usage took its rise during the Arian troubles.’

All advocates of the divine right of episcopacy would, we may assume, readily admit the fact of the innovation in the fourth century, which forbade the Alexandrian presbyters to preach ; why then should they be sceptical as to the restriction in the third century, which, as we have seen, directed them in future not to consecrate, or ordain their Patriarch ?

it. It is at least certain that St. Mark did not compose it in its present form.'

Dr. Neale, on the other hand, was of opinion that 'the general form and arrangement of the Liturgy of St. Mark may safely be attributed to the Evangelist himself, and to his immediate followers, St. Anianus, St. Abilius, and St. Cerdo. With the exception of certain manifestly interpolated passages, it had probably assumed its present appearance by the end of the second century.'

It is somewhat fortunate that there are known circumstances in early Egyptian Ecclesiastical History, which, compared with certain passages in this Primitive Liturgy, will enable us to come very near to its real date.

1. The title prefixed is—'The Divine Liturgy of the holy Apostle and Evangelist Mark, a Disciple of the holy Peter.' This title cannot well be earlier than A.D. 200 : and again it cannot be much later : in either case, St. Mark would scarcely have been styled an Apostle.

2. The opening Prayer speaks of 'the holy Day' on which the Liturgy was celebrated. This again points to a middle period, somewhere between the fervour of the early Disciples, who broke 'the Bread,' daily, from house to house, and the revival of daily Communion in Post-Nicene times. Dr. Neale says in a note—'It is a mistake to conclude from the expression—"this holy day," that the Liturgy was only used on the Sunday, since we know from the replies of Timothy, Patriarch of Alexandria, A.D. 380-385, that it was said daily.' But what was done at the close of the fourth century gives no clue to the practice of the end of the second, or beginning of the third century, unless, of course, we bring down the date of the Liturgy as low as 380.

3. There is a petition in the same opening Prayer for the holy Catholic and Apostolic Church. The epithet

Catholic, as applied to the Church, seems to have been introduced about the beginning or middle of the second century, but the title Apostolic did not come into use, in the same connection, before its close, if indeed so early.

4. The Prayer which follows is a Prayer for the King, that is, for the Emperor of Rome. Dr. Neale remarks upon its singularly crabbed construction, and observes that there can be no doubt that it and the two following Prayers are of the most remote antiquity.

But this conclusion is scarcely warranted by the premises. All that the 'crabbed construction' proves is, that the Prayer for the Emperor was composed before the time of Constantine, and then altered to suit the new order of things, consequent upon the conversion of the Emperor; thus great confusion is introduced.

5. The next prayer is one for the pope, and the bishop, that is, as has been assumed by Liturgiologists (but without any kind of proof), for the Patriarch of Alexandria, and the bishop of the city in which the Liturgy happened to be celebrated. But the title of pope, as appropriated exclusively to the head of the Presbyteral College of Alexandria, occurs in no very ancient document; and we know that there were no bishops in the provinces of Egypt before the time of Demetrius, A.D. 190.

There can be no doubt that the original Prayer was a very simple one on behalf of the clergy, and that it was remodelled from time to time, as innovations were introduced, and that it received its present form towards the close of the fourth century, when the ecclesiastical hierarchy assumed the shape which it finally retained. This is the reason why the Greek Text is, in this place, hopelessly corrupt, and why, besides the pope and the

bishop, mention is made of presbyters, deacons, subdeacons, readers, singers, and the laity.¹

Again, we may suspect that confusion has been introduced into this Prayer from another source. There is a reference to the original gift of the Holy Ghost to the Apostles, and we may conjecture that, as the Prayer ran, when first composed, there was a petition that He might descend upon those then present, as He did upon the first Disciples, and that this was altered in later times, from a feeling of humility.

6. Alexandria is called a Christ-loving city, or a city dear to Christ.² The portions of the Liturgy where this expression occurs must clearly have been written in the fourth century.

7. But the passages which most nearly determine a date, are those which refer to a state of persecution in Egypt; as where prayer is made for the brethren 'who are in prisons, or mines, for those who have been condemned by the tribunals, for those in banishment, or in bitter slavery.' There is no evidence of any persecution of Christians in Egypt until the time of Severus.³ So

¹ There are two prayers for the clergy, one following the other. The second prayer is an intercession for the descent of the Holy Ghost upon them; and proceeds: οὕτως καὶ ἐφ' ἡμᾶς περιεστηκότας δούλους σου, ἐν τῇ εἰσόδῳ τῆς ἱερουργίας σὺν τοῖς ἐπισκόποις, πρεσβυτέροις, διακόνοις, ἀναγιώταις, ψάλταις καὶ λαϊκοῖς, κ.τ.λ. The σὺν followed by the nouns in the dative case seems to be an interpolation. The strong probability is that the original prayer had no σὺν, and read ἐπισκόπους in the accusative, putting it in apposition with περὶ. δούλους σου: thus connecting the position of these bishops, standing around the officiating bishop, or presbyter, with the passage in the liturgy of St. Clement, in which the celebrant of the Holy Eucharist is spoken of as seated with the rest of the bishops. See chap. II. p. 46.

² Φιλόχριστος.

³ See Neale's Hist. of the Church of Alex. vol. i. sects. 2, 3.

far therefore as the evidence to be drawn from these passages shows, the Liturgy could not have been compiled previous to 205.

The above are the chief reasons for denying a very early date to the Liturgy of St. Mark, viewed as to its substance, and main features. Very late insertions have not been noticed, because they are clearly interpolations, which a tyro in criticism would have no difficulty in distinguishing.

The next point of interest connected with this Liturgy is, to point out certain features, which are partly indicative of the very highest antiquity, partly not inconsistent with such a claim.

1. The officiating priest signs with the sign of the cross the dishes and cups upon the Holy Table. The very fact of there being a number of vessels containing bread and wine, almost of itself, takes us back to Apostolic times. We have seen that St. Mark and the Christians of Cyrene, according to his Acts, all partook together of a little bread upon the sea-shore, before he embarked for Egypt. That would seem to have been a primitive Sacrament of Holy Communion.¹ And there cannot be a doubt that the tendency of Catholic instinct, and very proper and reverential instinct, has been to deprive the Eucharist more and more of the character of a meal, and to restrict the quantity of the material elements of bread and wine to the smallest possible dimensions.

In order to avoid being misunderstood, I would here observe, once for all, that in such passages as the above, I desire to avoid, as much as may be, every expression of theological opinion, and to deal simply, and honestly with the evidence of existing documents.

¹ Even Tillemont says, 'it was not without a mystery.'

2. The Altar is called the All-holy Table.¹ The word 'table' in this application, is infrequent in all ancient Liturgies; but it does occur in Philo's description of the apparently Eucharistic Feasts of the Therapeutæ.

3. Several other technical, or ecclesiastical words used in this Liturgy, are not those of later times, but such as belong with great probability to the First Age of the Church. Thus converts are called Proselytes; Christian assemblies are designated by a name derived from the synagogue.²

4. There are other passages in the Liturgy which seem to connect it with the account of the Therapeutæ, given by Philo Judæus. The concluding portion of the Prayer last referred to is one. 'Bless, O Lord, our assemblies: grant that they may be without harm and hindrance, according to Thy holy will. Grant unto us houses of prayer, houses of blessing, and unto Thy servants with us for ever.' The beginning of another prayer would be very appropriate to what we know of the habits of the Therapeutæ; but not quite suitable for an ordinary Eucharistic Service. What is called the Anaphora commences thus—'It is indeed meet and right, holy and becoming, and profitable for our souls, to praise Thee, Thou Who art, O Sovereign Lord God, Father Almighty: to sing hymns to Thee, to give thanks to Thee, to confess to Thee, both night and day with unceasing mouth, and unsilent lips, and with hearts that know not rest:' then, after proceeding in a manner somewhat similar to other Liturgies, the Prayer concludes thus—'We offer this reasonable and unbloody service, which all nations offer

¹ Παναγία τραπέζη. See Philo: De vitâ contemplativâ.

² Ἑπισυναγωγὴ: συναγωγὴ seems to have been a technical term for Christian assemblies in Egypt, as late as the patriarchate of St. Dionysius. See Eus. H. E. vii. 11.

unto Thee, O Lord, from the rising unto the setting sun, from the North unto the South, for great is Thy name among all nations, and in every place incense is offered unto Thy name and sacrifice and offering.' All these passages should be carefully compared with the account of the Therapeutæ given by Philo.

5. Another indication of the high antiquity of this liturgy, in its original form, may be traced in the present corrupt state of the text where the kiss of peace is spoken of. This kiss of peace, seems, in apostolic times, and for some little while afterwards, to have been given by men to women, and by women to men, but was afterwards restricted to be given by men to men only, and by women to women. The original Prayer would very naturally plead, that this kiss might be given in all innocence and purity; afterwards, when the custom was modified, the Prayer for purity would be felt to be, to a certain extent, inappropriate, and would be altered to its present shape of asking that the kiss may be given in all *sincerity*, and without guile, or hypocrisy. All this would introduce confusion into the text, which even now retains traces of the original form of the Prayer.

Yet one more trace of a far higher than Nicene antiquity is the Prayer for the souls of all the faithful departed, in which even St. Mark himself is included, that God would give him rest.

Judging from what we know of Christian antiquity, such a petition would be a moral impossibility two or three generations after St. Mark's death, and we may safely assign to this particular Prayer a date, not later than the middle of the second century.

A third point for consideration is, that if this Liturgy has any claim to a very high antiquity, we should expect to find some traces of Philonic influence in its thoughts

and expressions. This, a careful analysis will, to some extent, enable us to do.¹

In the last place, we might expect to find, here and there in the Liturgy, some miscellaneous traces of a connection with St. Mark, through him with St. Peter, and through St. Peter with the Roman, or Petrine Liturgy. A few such traces I believe may be found.

1. Our Lord is spoken of, as ‘the Bread which came down from Heaven.’ If there be any truth in the story, related by St. Epiphanius, about St. Mark, this would be a curious undesigned confirmation of it, for we may be sure that after his reconversion, the Discourse recorded in the 6th of St. John would leave a permanent mark upon his mind.

2. The indications of some kind of literary connection between this Liturgy and the First Epistle of St. Peter, are very numerous, especially taking into consideration the comparative brevity of each work. Both have the peculiar expression—‘Which things the angels stoop down to look into.’ And what is very noticeable is, that in the Liturgy the relative, ‘which things,’ has no grammatical antecedent. Both call Christ ‘the Lamb without spot:’² both make use of the Old Testament passage, ‘Be ye holy, for I am holy:’ both employ the word ‘reasonable,’³ in a very peculiar and especially Philonic sense: and both contain that most unusual New Testament word, ‘divine.’⁴

¹ Cf., for instance, the reference to that undoubtedly Alexandrian work, in the form in which we now possess it, St. James’s Epistle, i. 22. The liturgy has *ικάνωσον ἡμᾶς . . . μὴ μόνον ἀκροάτας, ἀλλὰ καὶ ποιήτας λόγον*. Cf. this with Philo’s, *ὁ μὲν γὰρ τοῦ σπουδαίου βίος ἐν ἔργοις, κ.τ.λ.* De Somniis.

² Ἄμωμος ἄμωμος.

³ St. Peter, *λογικὸν γάλα*; St. Mark, *λογικὸν σου θυσιαστήριον*.

⁴ Θεῖος.

But, perhaps, the most curious coincidence between these two writings consists in the use of the epithet 'precious,'¹ which is applied by St. Peter, alone of New Testament writers, to the Blood of Christ. It is used once by St. Clement of Rome, St. Peter's disciple, in the same connection. But in this Liturgy, the word may be said actually to abound. The Holy Table is called 'precious'—'Cause us to approach with all good conscience to Thy precious Altar;' and towards the end of the Liturgy the expression, 'Precious Blood,' will be found to occur no less than five times. It is surely not too much to conclude that all these coincidences, or parallels, with others which might be pointed out, must be something more than merely accidental.

In the last place, we find in St. Mark's Liturgy, as we might *à priori* have expected, some interesting links of connection between the Eastern and Western Church.

It has been said by so eminent a liturgiologist as Dr. J. M. Neale, that though the Invocation of the Holy Ghost, that 'He would make the Bread and Wine to become the Body and Blood of Christ,' originally formed a part of all Liturgies, the Petrine has entirely lost it. The latter portion of this statement is certainly incorrect. To this day there occurs in the Roman, or Petrine Mass, a Prayer, or Invocation to the Third Person of the Blessed Trinity, which is to be used as soon as the elements have been placed upon the Altar—'Come, Almighty Sanctifier, Eternal God, and bless this Sacrifice prepared in honour of Thy Holy Name.' And the short previous Prayer, at the first offering of the Chalice—'Receive, O Lord, this Chalice of Salvation, that it may go up with the odour of a sweet smell, for our salvation and that of the whole

¹ τίμιος.

world,' has certainly a verbal connection, but probably something more, with St. Mark's Prayer of the Entrance—
'Cleanse, O Lord, our lips and our hearts from all pollution and from all guile, that with a pure heart, and a clean conscience, we may offer this incense unto Thee for an odour of a sweet smell, and for the remission of our own sins, and those of all Thy people.'

But the chief Liturgical dispute between the great Churches of the East and West, has arisen from the position of the Invocation of the Holy Ghost in the Offices of the former, after the words of Institution.

On the one hand the Latins have gone so far as to accuse the Greeks of heresy, in praying that the Bread and Wine might become the Body and Blood of Christ, *after* they had been already so made by the words of Institution: and on the other hand, the Greeks have not been slow to return the charge, by saying that the Latins were guilty of omitting a Prayer, which is of the very essence of the Eucharistic Service.

In the Liturgy of St. Mark, as we have already seen in that of St. Clement,¹ both the contending parties might find a bond of union, a possibility of harmony and concord. For, remarkably enough, in it there are contained two Invocations of the Holy Ghost, one before the words of Institution, or, to use Western language, before Consecration, the other after. The first Invocation is certainly of an objective character,—'For of a truth, the heaven and the earth are full of Thy holy glory, through the Manifestation of our Lord and God and Saviour, Jesus Christ: fill also, O Lord, this Sacrifice with Thy blessing, through the coming down upon it of Thy All Holy Spirit;' thus drawing a doctrinal parallel between the work of

¹ Page 52.

the Holy Ghost in the Incarnation, and His work in the Holy Eucharist. And to this, no instructed Western would for a moment demur.

Next, with equal significance, the Invocation after the words of Institution is entirely of a *Subjective* character ; ‘ We pray and beseech Thee, O merciful and gracious God, send down from the height of Thy holy place the very Paraclete, the Spirit of Truth, the Holy, the Lord, the Life-giving, even Thy Holy Ghost, both upon ourselves and upon these loaves and these cups, that He may hallow and perfect them that He may make the Bread the Body, and the Cup the Blood of the New Testament, that they may be to us all *who partake thereof*, for faith, for sobriety, for healing, for temperance, for sanctification, for renewal of soul, of body, and of spirit ; for the participation of the blessedness of eternal life and immortality : for the glory of Thy Holy Name ; for the remission of sins, that Thy most holy and precious and glorious name may, both here and everywhere, be hallowed and hymned and sanctified, with Jesus Christ and the Holy Ghost.’ Than this prayer, viewed as a connected whole, nothing could well be more subjective, and what therefore every Western might with perfect consistency approve. It is wonderful indeed that contending theologians have not long ago universally recognised this. If the love of unity and peace had been as strong as the spirit of hatred ; and the desire for harmony as powerful as the delight in controversy, it must have been felt ages since, that in this point at least, the miserable feuds between East and West might have been simply annihilated by meeting together upon the common ground of the Liturgy of St. Peter’s Disciple, the Founder of the great Church of Alexandria.

CHAPTER VII.

SAINT LUKE—HIS LITERARY HISTORY—HIS GOSPEL—THE ACTS OF THE APOSTLES—HIS CONNECTION WITH THE EPISTLE TO THE HEBREWS—LATE TRADITIONS.

THE chief interest attaching to St. Luke is, his position as one of the canonical writers of the New Testament Scriptures.

There is something quite refreshing in reviewing his history, not to find him assigned as bishop to any Church. He is almost the only distinguished Apostolic person for whom such a rank does not appear to be claimed.

Of his personal history there is, apart from the Scriptures, absolutely nothing to be gathered from very ancient or authentic sources beyond the statement that he was a native of Antioch.¹ From the Scriptures we learn that he was called the beloved physician; and that he was the constant companion of St. Paul in his later travels.

Of his literary history, a few particulars are preserved by Eusebius, and one or two other reliable authors.

There is even less evidence than there is in the case of St. Mark, that he had ever seen our Lord, or had been a disciple of His, when He taught in the Flesh. Several ancient writers were of opinion that when St. Paul spoke of ‘the Brother whose praise is in the Gospel,’ and when he used the expression, ‘according to my Gospel,’ he was referring to St. Luke’s written Gospel in

¹ Eus. H. E. iii. 4.

the composition of which he exercised, at least an indirect influence. If we knew that this opinion were founded upon any sub-apostolic tradition, it would be valuable evidence, but unfortunately, in this instance, Eusebius does not tell us whether it be a mere conjecture, or whether he had ancient authority for it.¹

Eusebius, in comparing the three previous Gospels with that of St. John, has a singular statement, which tends to show that the ideas of degrees of inspiration, and of greater, or less authority, as possessed by Canonical Books, were not altogether unfamiliar to the early Church. After giving as the reason why St. John did not relate anything about our Lord's earthly genealogy, or the events of His early years, that they had been already treated of by St. Matthew and St. Luke, he proceeds to say, that 'he began with our Lord's Divine Nature, as though the Holy Ghost had reserved it for him as for a superior,' or, 'as for one better than they.'² Such an idea would not be difficult to understand, if St. John and St. Matthew had been compared with the two other Evangelists, but that a comparison, even in a slight degree disparaging to the latter, should be drawn between St. John and St. Matthew, both being of the number of the Twelve, does seem strange. If it prove nothing else, it shows that early ideas about the inspiration of written documents were very different from those which have been formulated since, and obtained all but universal currency.

The comparatively pure and classical style of St. Luke's

¹ Unless, indeed, he thought the words which he quotes from Irenæus (καὶ Λουκᾶς δὲ ὁ ἀκόλουθος Παύλου, τὸ ὑπ' ἐκείνου κηρυσσόμενον εὐαγγέλιον ἐν βιβλίῳ κατέθετο, II. E. v. 8) a sufficient warrant for his statement. But Irenæus himself does not give his authority.

² Ibid. iii. 24. Ὡς ἂν αὐτῷ πρὸς τοῦ θεοῦ Πνεύματος οἷα κρείττονι παραπεφυλαγμένης.

Greek has often been remarked both by ancient and modern writers. The natural inference to be drawn from this fact will be, that though the author was born at Antioch, he was of Greek parentage and education. If, however, the conjecture of a very learned man,¹ that Syriac idioms may be traced in St. Luke's writings, be really well founded, it is a remarkable and undesigned coincidence with the statement of Eusebius.

St. Luke's Gospel is brought into great and early prominence in consequence of the prevalence of one of the most subtle and powerful heresies with which the Primitive Church was forced to contend, that of Marcion.

It seems to be a kind of law in the development of all heresies, that though we find the seeds of falsehood scattered here and there in the teachings of the earlier heresiarchs, indications and foreshadowings of the fulness of error, roots of bitterness giving promise of what the perfect plant will be, yet it is some one individual teacher, who rises up, and makes each false principle his own peculiar, his own especial domain.

Thus it was with Marcion. Of Simon Magus alone perhaps, can it be affirmed, that he was what we may venture to call a great, original, creative genius. He alone might be styled Antichrist, as bringing forward a new revelation of error, worthy, though only for its novelty's sake, to be matched as an antagonist against the Divine Revelation of the Christ, the Only Begotten Son of God.

We need not enter upon the heresy of Marcion further than to say, that he took up one of those pregnant hints, the germ of which may be found in Simon Magus, to the effect, that the God of the Jews and of the Old Testament Dispensation is a different Being from the God of

¹ Hugo Grotius.

the New Covenant ; and elaborated it into a coherent and powerful system.

Tertullian was raised up by the Providence of God as the still more powerful defender of the Catholic faith. And the more we study the Marcionite heresy, the more we shall see that it required the genius of a Tertullian to cope with it.

The date of Marcion's birth is not known ; but there is no reason to doubt that he made his way to Rome from his native Pontus in, or about the year 140. It can be made clear that the four Gospels of Matthew, Mark, Luke and John were then in existence, were known, and received by many in the Church, and were, for the most part, substantially in the same condition as that in which we possess them now, sometime at least previous to the above date. This will appear from the very reason which Marcion assigned for rejecting the two first Gospels, together with that of St. John, at the same time that he received the third Gospel, although he maintained that even it had suffered interpolation. He did not reject the three Gospels on the ground that they were not written by the authors whose names they bore ; but he seized upon a statement of St. Paul in his Epistle to the Galatians, where he represents himself as rebuking St. Peter for being guilty of dissimulation, and for not walking according to the truth of the Gospel, and argued with much plausibility, that if such were St. Peter's character in so important a matter as the observance of the Jewish ceremonial Law, at a very critical period, no reliance can be placed upon the truth of St. Mark's Gospel, which was allowed to be a *resumé* of Peter's preaching concerning our Lord and His Ministry. Further, he asks, if so great an Apostle as Peter's testimony is unreliable, why should we give more credit to that of St. Matthew and St. John ?

Tertullian meets this attack with his usual acuteness by saying, that St. Peter's error at Antioch was not anything which had relation to doctrine, but one which bore only upon his practice. St. Paul and he were agreed in theory, and this very agreement furnished the basis of St. Paul's rebuke. It is scarcely necessary to say that all this is not stated by Tertullian in so many words : but it is evidently the drift of this portion of his refutation of Marcionism.

What, however, we are now concerned to point out is, the incalculable value which these patristic controversies with the early heretics, which have been usually regarded as something ineffably dull and dreary, possess for us, in determining almost to a demonstration the probable approximate dates of some of the Canonical Books of the New Testament. For to what do the admissions of Marcion fairly amount? Marcion himself was flourishing within about thirty years of the death of St. John. He was living at a time when there must have been thousands of persons in existence who had seen, or conversed with the last of the Apostles.

Marcion's line therefore was very different from that taken by some later heretics. He did not deny that the Gospels of Matthew, Mark, Luke and John were really written by the authors whose names they bore, but he impugned and rejected the authority of three of them, for other reasons which he assigned. St. Luke's Gospel he admitted as authoritative, on account of certain passages which it contained, and which he thought favoured his peculiar views. To sum up the argument. We can hardly doubt that if Marcion had seen any grounds for rejecting the Gospels on the score of *authorship*, he would have been only too glad to have done so. He was quite acute enough for this : but he did not venture to dispute the testimony of living witnesses in the case of one

Gospel, and the next thing to it, in the case of the rest. So that we are in a position to say, that about A.D. 130, or 140, all persons throughout the world, whose attention had been directed to the subject, heretics as well as Catholics, allowed that our Four Gospels were not only in existence, but had actually been written by the authors to whom they were assigned. The same process of reasoning entirely covers the Epistle of St. Paul to the Galatians. It is Marcion himself who brings it forward in favour of his own views. Tertullian does not dispute the authority of the Epistle, as he would instantly have done, as he and other Fathers did do, without hesitation, in other cases of disputed Books; but contented himself with disproving Marcion's inference from St. Paul's statement of facts.

It may be remarked in passing, that a cognate line of reasoning partially covers the Apocalypse of St. John, for although, as Tertullian allows, Marcion rejected it ¹ with contempt, yet the very fact of such a rejection shows, that it was then in existence, and had been received by many within half a century of its alleged publication.

In view of the entire argument, it will be seen how much more powerful, as against opponents, are the admissions, whether express or implied, of such men as Marcion, than are the direct assertions of contemporary orthodox writers.

But whilst such incontestable proof of the authenticity of the Gospels and some other Canonical Books may be derived from Tertullian's controversy with Marcion, or to speak perhaps with greater accuracy, with the doctrines and the sect which he left behind him, it is of only less importance to point out, that Tertullian was able to make

¹ Apocalypsin Joannis Marcion respuit.

the splendid defence which he did of orthodox Christianity, because he declined to attempt to prove too much, or to hamper himself with any theories about the inspiration of Apostolic writings.

Marcion professed to accept the Gospel of St. Luke under certain conditions. Tertullian boldly meets him upon this, his own ground ; and as good as says this— ‘ Granted that the Gospel of St. Luke has been interpolated, granted that your expurgated copy of it is the genuine representation of the original, granted that St. Luke’s Gospel is opposed in some respects to the other three, and granted that it is a genuine exponent of the teaching of the Apostle Paul, still I maintain that your case is very far from being made out. We must go not by one, nor by two Apostolic men, however venerable : and not St. Paul himself, still less St. Luke, goes back to the first founding of Christianity. We must go by what all have taught and delivered ; we must go by the general analogy of the Faith, and by what has been the tradition of the whole Church ; and by this test we must try even St. Paul and St. Luke themselves ; for it would be reversing the natural order of things to try the whole Church by their standard.’

Thus it is indeed most instructive to find how the greatest of the early Fathers were wont (for Tertullian’s reasoning is only a very able specimen of what is common enough) to fall back upon the great central, objective fact, that Christianity was a Divine Revelation, that the custody and defence of this Revelation were committed to the Catholic Church, as a whole, and that the continued existence of this Divine Revelation, and of its divinely appointed Guardian, the entire body of baptized believers in Christ, was by no means necessarily and absolutely dependent upon any writings, however precious, nor upon

any individual men, however honoured and however venerable.

We may see the recognition of this grand principle running through the writings of such primitive Saints as Clement of Rome and Ignatius of Antioch, before the Canon of the New Testament was formed. And here we meet with the same principle influencing the thoughts and arguments of the great Tertullian, when the New Testament Scriptures were beginning, at least, to be generally recognised as something apart from other writings, as something unique in themselves. It may perhaps, be improbable that the Primitive Church would have allowed that any genuine Apostolic, or quasi Apostolic writings contained errors of any kind : but supposing, for the sake of argument, that they would have countenanced such a theory, it would not have shaken their faith in the Christian Religion, as a Revelation from the God of eternal truth, one atom or one grain. Can nineteenth century Christianity say as much ? ¹

¹ The passage of Tertullian, upon which the foregoing statements and arguments are based, seems of such immense importance, that it is felt to be right to give it in the original :

‘Constituimus in primis Evangelicum Instrumentum Apostolos auctores habere, quibus hoc munus Evangelii promulgandi ab ipso Domino sit impositum. Si et Apostolicos, non tamen solos, sed cum Apostolis et post Apostolos. Quoniam prædicatio discipulorum suspecta fieri posset de gloriæ studio, si non adsistat illi autoritas magistrorum, immo Christi, qui magistros Apostolos fecit. Denique, nobis fidem ex Apostolis, Johannes et Matthæus insinuant; ex Apostolicis Lucas et Marcus instaurant, iisdem regulis exorsi quantum ad unicum Deum attinet Creatorem, et Christum ejus natum ex Virgine, supplementum Legis et Prophetarum. Viderit enim si narrationum dispositio variavit, dummodo de capite fidei conveniat, de quo cum Marcione non convenit.’ And a little further on, he says: ‘Porro Lucas non Apostolus, sed Apostolicus, non magister, sed discipulus; utique magistro minor; certe tanto posterior, quanto posterioris Apostoli sectator, ut et si sub

Of St. Luke's Authorship of the Acts of the Apostles there is little to be said, as far as the testimony of the Primitive Church is concerned. There seems to have been scarcely any doubt that St. Luke wrote it, and that it was a true and honest account by one who had access to the best sources of information, and had been a personal companion and intimate friend of one of the chief persons whose actions are described: and lastly, that it came by degrees to be accounted one of those venerable documents, contemporary with the age of the Apostles, which, in process of time, were looked upon as a class of writings apart by themselves, and were called the New Testament. More than this, a candid writer would scarcely claim; and one thing is certain, no further claim can be made out from the testimony of the Primitive Church.

Eusebius says very simply, but with a simplicity which appeals to the understanding for an acknowledgment of its truthfulness—'Luke, who has handed down the Acts of the Apostles in writing, concluded his history by saying, that Paul dwelt two whole years at Rome, as a prisoner

ipsius Pauli nomine, Evangelium Marcion intulisset, non sufficeret ad fidem singularitas Instrumenti, destituta patrociniis antecessorum. Exigeretur enim id quoque Evangelium, quod Paulus invenit, cui fidem dedit, cui mox suum congruere gestiit.' And again, after some close and admirable reasoning: 'Eadem auctoritas ecclesiarum apostolicarum ceteris quoque patrociniabitur Evangeliiis, quæ proinde per illas et secundum illas habemus; Joannis dico et Matthæi; licet et quod Marcus edidit, Petri adfirmatur, cujus interpretes Marcus: nam et Lucæ digestum, Paulo adscribere solent. Capit magistrorum videri quæ discipuli promulgarint.' *Adv. Marcionem*, lib. iv. After first reading, then reflecting upon, and then transcribing these noble words, all I can say is, that I am almost lost in admiration at their far-reaching breadth of thought, and that none need wonder that with such a system, and with such expositors and defenders of it, the Primitive Church should have overthrown idolatry, and brought the world to her feet.

at large, and preached the word of God, no man forbidding him.'¹

The above remarks upon the authenticity of the Acts of the Apostles will not be looked upon as an overstrained view of the testimony of the earlier, or Ante-Nicene Church. It is when we come down about a hundred years later, to the end of the fourth, or the beginning of the fifth century, that we are startled by such a passage as the following in the writings of so eminent an ecclesiastic as St. Chrysostom—'This book, the Acts of the Apostles, is even now unknown to, or unrecognised by many. They are certain neither as to the work itself, nor as to its author, or compiler.'²

After this, the criticisms of even advanced German writers are not fairly open to the charge of want of moderation.

There appears to be a pretty general consensus of the foreign Schools of critical Theology, that the Gospel of St. Luke, and the Acts are, in the main, the work of the same Author. Whilst however admitting this, there are some who are unwilling to concede that the writer was Luke, the companion of Paul. They are of opinion that

¹ H. E. ii. 22.

² Πολλοὶς τοῦτο τὸ βιβλίον οὐδ' ὅτι ἔστι, γινώριμόν ἐστιν, οὐδὲ αὐτὸ, οὐδὲ ὁ γραφῆς αὐτὸ καὶ συνθεῖς. Διὸ καὶ μάλιστα εἰς ταύτην ἐμμανὸν ἔκρινα θεῖναι τὴν πραγμάτειαν, ὥστε καὶ τοὺς ἀγνοοῦντας διδάξαι, καὶ μὴ ἀφεῖναι τοσούτον λανθάνειν καὶ ἀποκρύπτεσθαι θησαυρόν. These are the words with which St. Chrysostom commences his Homilies on the Acts of the Apostles. They are certainly startling, taken by themselves; but a careful consideration of the context may perhaps incline us to think that St. Chrysostom did not intend to speak of any hesitation on the part of the Church, or of well-informed persons, in receiving the Acts into the Canon of the New Testament, nor yet of any real doubt that St. Luke was its author; but that he was describing the extreme popular ignorance, which prevailed at Antioch, and probably elsewhere, about this portion of Scripture.

the discrepancies between the Acts and St. Paul's Epistles are too numerous and too important to admit of it. This is not the place to enter into an examination of the matter in detail, especially as most Christians will, probably for many years to come, be satisfied with the argument in Archdeacon's Paley's '*Horæ Paulinæ*,' as a fair set-off against the objections alluded to. Whatever is truth will prevail in the end, and will be acknowledged by the world as well as by the Church to be truth. And what will most probably be accepted as the truth about the Acts of the Apostles, will be, that it is a very honest account by a contemporary of the history which he professes to write ; but that the author had just as much, or just as little infallibility as the present, or any other Bishop of Rome has now, or ever had. And how much of that will be acknowledged in the centuries which are yet in the womb of futurity can scarcely be doubtful.

Important modern testimonies, or admissions in favour of the authenticity of St. Luke's Gospel, are those of Renan and Mayer, who are of opinion that it is in the main, the work of the companion of St. Paul. Hilgenfeld also admits, that it is quoted in the Epistle of Barnabas, a work which he assigns to the end of the First Century.

The Epistle to the Hebrews raises widely different questions. We have here the phenomenon of a Book being considered doubtful, or placed amongst spurious works, that is to say, amongst the writings not received by the whole Christian body, mainly because it was of unascertained or unknown authorship. Had St. Paul been universally believed to be the Author, it would have met with exactly the same reception as the Epistle to the Romans.

But the state of the case is very different. That the Epistle was in existence in very early, probably in Apos-

tolie times is perfectly evident. And it is equally evident, that the next generation of Christians to that in which it first appeared, was at a loss to whose authorship to assign it. In one point only every one was agreed, that in its actually existing Greek shape, it was impossible to regard it as the work of St. Paul.

Origen had evidently studied the question carefully. He knew without doubt the opinions of all the learned men, his predecessors and contemporaries, upon the difficulties involved; and in his *Homilies upon the Epistle*, he thus admirably sums them up :¹

‘The peculiar style in which the Epistle to the Hebrews is written, is dissimilar in its character from that of the Apostle Paul, who confessed himself to be rude in speech, that is to say, in his diction: but that this Epistle is thoroughly Hellenic in its composition would be acknowledged by every one competent to give an opinion about difference of style. But then, on the other hand, the thoughts in the Epistle are marvellous, and inferior to none of the universally acknowledged Apostolic writings: as will be sufficiently plain to all attentive readers of these works.’

He then proceeds to examine the question of probable authorship.

‘I would say that it appears to me, that the thoughts are the Apostle’s, but the language, and the composition generally, are those of some one who remembered the Apostle’s teaching, and who wrote down at his leisure what had been said by his master. If then any Church receive this Epistle as written by Paul, let it be congratulated upon so doing. For ancient writers have not ascribed it to him, without some good reason: although, as

¹ Eus. H. E. vi. 25.

I have intimated, the absolute truth concerning the writer God alone knows. What has come down to our time¹ is, that some say, Clement, who became Bishop of the Romans, wrote the Epistle, others Luke, who wrote the Gospel and the Acts.'

The evidence as to the authorship of the Epistle to the Hebrews, in its present Greek form, seems pretty evenly balanced between St. Luke and St. Clement. In favour of the latter is the internal evidence furnished by the Epistle itself, which certainly has many more resemblances to St. Clement's Epistle to the Corinthians, than it has parallels with the undoubted writings of St. Luke.² At the same time no decisive conclusion can be drawn from this fact; for if the Epistle to the Hebrews be carefully compared with the Epistle of St. Barnabas, it will be found that there are as many, perhaps more, parallels discoverable between them, than there are between the

¹ *I.e.* about the middle of the third century.

² Compare Heb. i. 3, where the Son of God is called *χαρακτήρ τῆς ὑποστάσεως αὐτοῦ*, with St. Clem. ad Cor. c. 33, where he calls man *χαρακτήρα τῆς εἰκόνος τοῦ Θεοῦ*: and Heb. xii. 17, *τόπον μετανοίας*, with Ad Cor. c. 7, *Ἐν γενέᾳ καὶ γενέᾳ μετανοίας τόπον ἔδωκεν ὁ Δεσπότης τοῖς βουλομένοις ἐπιστραφῆναι ἐπ' Αὐτόν*. It seems probable that in both these passages there is a reference to the practice of the Primitive Church of assigning a particular place in their assemblies to penitents. Lastly, there are two parallel passages in these Epistles, which are to my mind all but conclusive as to a connection of some kind between their authors. One is, the remarkable passage, Heb. xii. 27, *Τὸ δὲ ἔτι ἅπαξ δηλοῖ τῶν σαλευομένων τὴν μετάθεσιν ὡς πεποιημένων, ἵνα μείνῃ τὰ μὴ σαλευόμενα*: the other Ad Cor. 20: *Οἱ οὐρανοὶ τῇ διοικήσει Αὐτοῦ σαλευόμενοι, ἐν εἰρήνῃ ὑποτάσσονται Αὐτῷ*. It seems to be the general opinion of the editors and critics that *μὴ* ought to be inserted before *σαλευόμενοι* in St. Clement's words; but this interpolation appears to me not only unnecessary, but to destroy the real meaning of the passage, which I believe is intended to describe the ceaseless yet orderly revolutions of the visible heavens, and the things therein, which are contrasted with those invisible heavens which remain *μὴ σαλευόμενοι*, for evermore.

Epistle to the Hebrews and the Epistle of Clement.¹ All that can be safely laid down with any certainty is, that the authors of all these epistles were largely influenced by the rising Christian philosophical school of Alexandria. The traces of this influence upon the writings of St. Barnabas and St. Clement are too obvious to need any pointing out. And as to St. Luke, there is a tradition that he had visited Alexandria in pursuit of learning. And it must not be forgotten, that Eusebius gives this very Epistle to the Hebrews as one instance of the embodiment of the views of the Alexandrian Therapeutæ in their expositions of the hidden meaning of the Old Testament Scriptures.

There is at once a remarkable parallel, and a curious contrast between the way in which the Epistle to the Hebrews and another disputed work, the Revelation of St. John, were received in the early Church. If, as there seems no reason to doubt, the former were written from Rome, then it was the Church of the very place where it was composed, which rejected it, even as late as the time of St. Jerome; whilst the far distant Church of Judea, to which it was addressed, and the Churches of Asia generally, appear to have always accepted it as of Apostolic origin and authority. And this was not because it spoke of Hebrew Christianity in too flattering terms; the contrary is the case. The Apocalypse on the other hand, was rejected by the Asiatics, and by one,² if not more, of the very Churches to which its opening passages are addressed by name. At the same time it was received by the distant Church of the Romans, whose city at least

¹ Tertullian actually calls the Epistle to the Hebrews, the Epistle of Barnabas.

² The Church of Laodiceæ.

seems to be identified, and in no obscure terms, with the seat of the crimes of the mystic Babylon, and the plagues by which they are to be avenged.

A perhaps not unreasonable view to take of the composition of this Epistle, would be to suppose, that St. Paul drew up in his own handwriting, or dictated a comparatively short draft, in the Hebrew language, of what he wished to say to his brethren according to the flesh. This letter, after a copy had been made, would be sent to Judæa. After a time St. Luke, or St. Clement, or some other accomplished friend of St. Paul, would set to work, it might be in his lifetime, and with his expressed sanction, or more probably, after his departure, to translate this letter into Greek. During the process, what were mere germs of thought in the original would be fully developed, additional proofs of the various arguments would be afforded from the Old Testament, and all would be done in accordance with St. Paul's known views, and with his general system of Scriptural illustration and exegesis: and there would be many reminiscences of his preaching at Rome and elsewhere. Then whilst copies of this elegant Greek treatise, for such our present Epistle to the Hebrews really is, would be multiplied and published, the original Hebrew draft would gradually be forgotten, and at last perish, like so many other writings of the Apostolic age. Such a theory becomes very probable, when we remember the confusion which ensued in the Church of Jerusalem, consequent upon the destruction of the city by Titus. The fact however that St. Paul had written a letter to the Hebrews would be well known, and when our present Epistle began to circulate in the East, probably in the second century, it would be readily received in an uncritical age as the original letter.

If this theory should be thought tenable, it will help to

explain some difficulties which have been felt with regard to this Epistle, both in ancient and modern times.

For instance, it was perceived even in St. Jerome's time, that it was unlikely that St. Paul, or indeed any Apostolic person should have written a letter to the Hebrews, and have made use of citations which they would not find in their own Hebrew Scriptures. St. Jerome refers to the entire argument in the ninth chapter, from the 15th to the 22nd verse, which would be simply unintelligible to those who were only acquainted with the Hebrew original of the Old Testament. It seems to have been felt that St. Paul in writing to Jews, would seek to conciliate them by quoting only the Hebrew text of their acknowledged Scriptures, even though both he and they were acquainted with the Septuagint. And this would be a natural result of what was well known to St. Paul, the great prejudice which existed against him at Jerusalem, in consequence of his supposed undue partiality for Greeks, and Grecian ideas.¹

If, however, we suppose that the argument in question was one of the portions added when the Epistle was translated into Greek, or rather, recast and enlarged in that language, this difficulty will vanish at once.

Again, the short notice about Timothy in the 13th Chapter was probably in the original Hebrew Letter, and was allowed to remain, when it was thrown into its present shape.

A closer study however of Philo brings out so many parallels between that writer and the Epistles of St. Paul which are generally admitted to be his,² such as the

¹ Acts xxi. 28, 29.

² Cf. especially Philo's *Εἰσαγάγων γὰρ φησιν, ἡμᾶς οἷα παῖδας ἀπὸ μαθητῶν ἀρχομένους διὰ τῆς σοφίας δογμάτων, καὶ μὴ ἀστοιχειώτους ἔσας*. *De Plant. Noe*, with St. Paul's entire argument in the third

Epistle to the Galatians, that I am not disposed to lay too much stress upon the almost innumerable traces of Philonic influence in the Epistle to the Hebrews, as against St. Paul's authorship, or joint authorship of this work. For these reminiscences of Philo can only be accounted for in one of two ways, either that St. Paul himself was well acquainted with the works of the Alexandrian Jew, which for chronological reasons does not seem very probable; or else that the Apostle employed to a much greater extent than has hitherto been supposed, the literary assistance of friends like Clement and Luke, who were well read in those writings, in the composition of the Epistles, which have been hitherto generally believed, at least in modern times, to be the work of the great Apostle himself alone.¹

The connection which undoubtedly exists between the present Greek form of the Liturgy of St. James of Jerusalem, and the present Greek form of the Epistle to the Hebrews, is beset with difficulties to those who claim a very early origin in Apostolic times for the Liturgy. It has been thought that St. Paul quoted this Liturgy in order to gratify the Jewish Christians. Such a supposition would be far from improbable, if we could think that the Holy Communion of the Supper of the Lord was celebrated by the Apostolic Church in Jerusa-

chapter of the Epistle to the Galatians. The coincidence in language, and still more in thought, seems to me too close to be unintentional. Cf. again, 'Ἄλλ' ὅπως μηδεὶς ὑπολάβῃ τὸν ποιητὴν χρεῖον εἶναι τινος τῶν γεγραμμένων. *De Plant. Noe*, with what appears to be the very carefully reported speech of St. Paul at Athens. Acts xvii. 24, 25.

¹ This idea was however perfectly familiar to St. Jerome, who says that the reason why St. Paul was so distressed at not finding Titus at Troas (2 Cor. ii. 12, 13), was because he wanted his assistance as an interpreter into Greek. Baronius seems quite shocked at this view of Jerome's. *Annal. tom. i.*

lem in the language of Greece. If we cannot think this, we must fall back upon another hypothesis.

The Hebrew original of the Epistle may have contained references to the Hebrew Liturgy. When the Epistle was thrown into its present shape, perhaps about the beginning of the second century, these quotations from the Liturgy would be rendered very freely into Greek. The next step would be, that when Hebrew ceased to be the liturgical language of the Church of Jerusalem, after the building of Elia by Adrian, those numerous passages in the Epistle to the Hebrews, which now agree verbally with the Liturgy, would be simply transferred from the former to the latter, just as they stood. This will account in a natural manner for all the phenomena of this curious and interesting literary connection.

I am not aware that any previous notice has been taken of the great number of citations from the Gospel of St. Luke, or allusions to it, which may be traced in the Egyptian Liturgy, which bears the name of Mark—a Liturgy which has been somewhat fully examined in the history of that Evangelist.¹

Can this be taken as a confirmation of the tradition that St. Luke visited Egypt? If he did, he would undoubtedly take some prominent part in founding and establishing the great Church of Alexandria. He might thus, very naturally, leave his mark upon its Liturgy.

One remark may be made in conclusion. A work

¹ The quotations from, and resemblances to, St. Luke's Gospel in St. Mark's Liturgy are too numerous to be given in detail; but there is one expression in the latter, which is so remarkable, τὰς ψυχὰς ἀνάπαισον, Δέσποτα, ἐν ταῖς τῶν ἁγίων σου σκηναῖς· that if it be compared with the equally remarkable expression in St. Luke xvi. 9, δέξονται ὑμᾶς εἰς τὰς αἰωνίους σκηνάς· I think it is of itself sufficient to prove some literary connection between the two works.

tracing out fully the influence of the philosophic School of Alexandria upon the acknowledged writings of St. Luke, and through St. Luke upon the mind of St. Paul, and St. Paul's theological system, has yet to be written. Such a work would be of great value, as well as deeply interesting.

All that is known about a treatise attributed to St. Luke, by Clement of Alexandria, and called a 'Disputation between Jason and Papiscus,' a volume to which there are many references in ancient writers, will be found in Tillemont's account of this Evangelist.¹ There is no special interest attaching to it, except that it furnishes one more proof how very numerous were the writings ascribed in the second and third centuries, to Apostles or Apostolic men,—writings which are now lost, but which, had they come down to us in their integrity, would have had as valid a claim to be considered the works of inspired, or infallible men, as the Books contained in the present Canon of the New Testament.

The traditions concerning the close of St. Luke's earthly career are more uncertain and contradictory than in almost any other instance in these early times. And that is saying a great deal. The reason is that there is little or no mention of him, except in connection with his literary labours, by any very ancient writer.

All that can be said is, that he most probably did not suffer martyrdom: that he survived his great master St. Paul for many years, dying somewhere about the close of the first century, at the venerable age of fourscore, at Patræ in Greece, a place which had been already rendered illustrious by the martyrdom of the Apostle St. Andrew.

It is scarcely necessary to add that the statement of

¹ Mém. Ecclés. tom. ii. p. 137, &c.

certain late Greek authors, that St. Luke suffered death by being crucified upon an olive tree, is not worthy of being called even a tradition. It is nothing more than a fabulous legend.

The tradition that St. Luke was a painter, and that he employed his pencil in painting portraits of Christ, of the Blessed Virgin, of some of the Apostles, and of other celebrated persons of the first age, has perhaps a slightly better foundation. In the offices of the Eastern Church it is very beautifully said of him, that 'he suffered a life-long martyrdom, by bearing about in his body the mortification of the Cross of Jesus.' And he is called 'the Star of the Church, who by the bright illumination of his writings, and his preaching, has cleared away the darkness of error from off all the earth.'

CHAPTER VIII.

THE PERSECUTION OF THE CHURCH UNDER DOMITIAN.

A BRIEF account of the persecution of the Church in the latter part of the reign of Domitian, though not belonging to the history of the second century, seems to be necessary for a full understanding of the much severer persecution of Christianity by Trajan.

The most amiable character of Pagan antiquity, 'the delight of the human race,' who thought that day lost in which he had not made some heart glad, the emperor Titus, had been succeeded by his brother, the insane tyrant Domitian.

How indescribably touching is the account in Suetonius of the last scene in the life of Titus. He knew that his brother was constantly plotting his destruction; yet he never swerved, from the first moment of his accession, from saying that Domitian should be his heir and successor. 'Sometimes he besought him, in private, with tears and prayers that there might be mutual love between them.' 'Thus death prevented him, to the greater loss of mankind than his own. Then when the Games were finished, at the end of which he had wept in the presence of the people, he sought the country of the Sabines, depressed in spirits, because the victim had fled from the sacrificing priest, and because it had thundered in a clear sky. When he had reached the

first station on his journey, he fell into a fever, and was removed to a litter. After a little while he put aside the curtains, and gazed wistfully at the heavens, complaining that life was being snatched away from him who had deserved a better fate. And that he was only conscious of one great fault of which he must repent.' 'What that fault was,' says Suetonius very touchingly, 'he did not himself say, nor would it be easy for any one to discover.'¹

Thus died Titus, after a life that would have been most Christian, if he had known Christ in this world. And when we read such things, it is hard not to see, how much more lovely was the doctrine of such as Clement of Alexandria, who taught that 'those who had not had Christ preached to them in this world, would have him preached to them in the world to come,' than that of St. Augustine, who placed even Lucretia in hell, with all that hell implies, because she chose death in preference to living in dishonour with a stain upon her chastity.² Such have been the unhappy results of reducing all things in the religion of the Lord Jesus Christ to a hard logical system. Still, in the very darkest times, the Catholic Church has sat uneasily beneath the incubus of these traditions of men, which were not from the beginning. And when she could not testify in any other way to her belief in a more loving Creed, she did it by legends and fables. Such was the fable, in which there was no little spiritual truth, of how Pope St. Gregory the Great, remembering, as he once went up the Capitoline hill, the

¹ Sueton. Titus, caps. 9, 10.

² De Civitate Dei, lib. i. c. 19. 'An forte ibi (*i.e.* in infernis) non est, quia non insontem, sed male sibi consciam se peremit?' St. Augustine argues that she must be in hell, whichever way you view her case.

act of Trajan in descending from his triumphal car and bestowing his gorgeous cloak upon a poor widow, asked God, for the sake of that act, to release his soul from hell. The sequel of the legend shows how the better instincts of mediæval Christianity were crushed, and driven back upon themselves as it were, by the supposed necessity, that all things should be reduced to conformity with a preconceived system of thought. St. Gregory was assured that for that once his prayer was heard—Trajan was liberated from Gehenna—but he must never make such a request to God again. Who cannot see that in this instance, at least, legend kept alive in men's minds some faint idea of the infinite love of God, a blessed truth which dogma had done its best to destroy?

Without endorsing Gibbon's opinion to its fullest extent, we may feel quite sure that there was no general persecution of Christianity, or of Christians, as such, at any time in the reign of Domitian. Notwithstanding this, a good many Christians did suffer. But they may be all brought under three classes.

1. Those who were accused of belonging to the race of David. Of this number were the grandchildren of Jude, and very probably St. John the Evangelist; though this last case does not seem to have been hitherto noticed in this connection. It may, however, account for St. John's alleged presence at Rome, whither he may have been summoned by the Emperor's command. Otherwise, it is a little difficult to understand how St. John came to be so far away from Ephesus, when he was thrown, as it is said, into the caldron of burning oil.

2. Those of Domitian's own family, and the courtiers, who either had embraced Christianity, or were suspected of it. Under this head we may place Flavia Domitilla.

The entire number of such sufferers must have been very small. And though Christianity was probably one of the accusations brought against them, it is far more likely that they really suffered from the tyrant's jealousy of his own kith and kin, and from his hatred of everyone who was eminent for goodness, or conspicuous in any other way.

3. Those who suffered from that chronic and never-failing source of Christian affliction—the popular tumults which were stirred up against them by the ignorant, or interested adherents of Paganism. These troubles seem to have been precisely similar, in their nature and origin, to those Persecutions of the Jews, which even we, who live in this nineteenth century, are constantly hearing of, now in this place, now in that. Gibbon frankly allows that Flavius Clemens, a son of Domitian's uncle, Flavius Sabinus, suffered death upon an accusation of belonging to a strange religion. Indeed the facts of the case are too plain to admit of much dispute. When the elder brother of Flavius Clemens was convicted upon a charge of treason, Clemens himself escaped, as being of a disposition, according to Suetonius, 'beneath contempt.' Domitian bestowed upon him in marriage his own niece Domitilla; and in default of offspring of his own, he adopted their children, and caused Clemens to be elected Consul.

Next we have the statement of Eusebius in his Ecclesiastical History, referring to the Persecution of Domitian in general,¹ that so 'illustrious was the teaching of the Christian Faith at this period, that writers far from friendly to our religion have not disdained to give an account of this Persecution, and of the martyrdoms which took place during its continuance.' One of the writers

¹ Eus. iii. 18.

here referred to, as we learn from the Chronicon of Eusebius, was Bruttius Præsens.

And turning back once more to the Ecclesiastical History, we find that Bruttius is given as one of the authorities for the following statement :

‘ These authors relate, specifying the fifteenth year of the reign of Domitian, that many persons suffered ; and that Flavia Domitilla, his niece, and the wife of Flavius Clemens, who was one of the Consuls of Rome at that time, was punished by banishment to the island of Pontia, for the sake of the testimony of Christ.’¹ Whether Bruttius said in so many words, that these people were punished for being Christians, or whether Eusebius only inferred it, it is impossible to say, the work being lost.

But another heathen writer, Dion, has, according to Gibbon, the following passage : ‘ Flavius Clemens had scarcely finished the term of his annual magistracy, when

¹ The actual words of Eusebius are rather curious :—Οἱ γε καὶ τὸν καιρὸν ἐπ’ ἀκριβὲς ἐπεσημήναντο, ἐν ἔτει πεντεκαιδεκάτῳ Δομετιανοῦ μετὰ πλείστων ἐτέρων καὶ Φλαυίαν Δομιτίλλαν ἱστορήσαντες, ἐξ ἀδελφῆς γεγονυῖαν Φλαυίου Κλήμεντος, ἐνὸς τῶν τηλικάδε ἐπὶ Ῥώμης ὑπάρχοντων, τῆς εἰς Χριστὸν μαρτυρίας ἕνεκεν, εἰς νῆσον Πόντιαν κατὰ τιμωρίαν δεδόσθαι. All the translators of Eusebius appear to have taken it for granted that this Flavia Domitilla was a niece of Domitian’s. But the strictest grammatical construction would be, that she was the niece, that is to say, the sister’s daughter, not of Domitian, but of Flavius Clemens. This is an additional reason for thinking that there really were two Domitillas ; though Gibbon dismisses the idea with a single word, as an evident mistake. But there is no reason why there may not have been two relatives of the emperor, of the same name, one of whom was banished to Pontia, the other to Pandataria. This would reconcile Eusebius, or rather Bruttius, with Dion. As Tillemont observes, the Church reckons one Domitilla amongst the *virgin* Saints. This was the niece of Flavius Clemens. *Mémoires Ecclés.* tom. ii. p. 127.

on a slight pretence he was condemned and executed. Domitilla was banished to a desolate island on the coast of Campania : and sentences, either of death or of confiscation, were pronounced against a great number of persons who were involved in the same accusation. The guilt imputed to their charge was that of *Atheism* and *Jewish manners*.'

Gibbon adds the following remarkably fair and sensible comment of his own : ' This singular association of ideas cannot with any propriety be applied, except to the Christians, as they were obscurely and imperfectly viewed by the magistrates and by the writers of that period. On the strength of so probable an interpretation, and too eagerly admitting the suspicions of a tyrant as an evidence of their honourable crime, the Church has placed both Clemens and Domitilla among its first martyrs, and has branded the cruelty of Domitian with the name of the Second Persecution.'

Gibbon evidently wishes to be perfectly candid and impartial in this case ; but it is clear to any one who will be at the trouble of a careful examination that the evidence for these people having been really Christians, and not only accused of Christianity, is stronger than he appeared to think.

A somewhat neglected chapter of history is the enquiry—how far the Christians were mixed up with the political troubles of this reign?

From a passage of Suetonius we may infer that Christians were now disposed to claim to be a different body from the Jews, and this perhaps even in some cases where they were Jews by race.

This was a complete change from the conduct of Christian Jews only a few years previously, as we may see in

the instance of Aquila and Priscilla in the Acts of the Apostles.

Suetonius is speaking of the severity with which the Temple tax was collected from the Jews after the destruction of Jerusalem, and in Domitian's reign, and says: ¹ 'The Jewish tax was exacted with the utmost rigour: and it was enforced upon persons who either lived the life of Jews, without professing it; or concealing their origin, would not pay the tribute imposed upon their nation.'

These people who lived after a Judaic method of life, but who would not allow that they were Jews, must surely have been Christians. It is perfectly well known that the Christians were for a long time looked upon as a Jewish sect. And to outsiders it was natural enough that this should be the case. Those Jews who had embraced Christianity, and with the adoption of their new faith had abandoned the ritual observances of the Levitical Law, would not by so doing escape payment of the Jewish poll-tax. There was a test which it was impossible for them to escape, or elude—the test of circumcision. Suetonius himself remembered being present as a youth, when an old man, ninety years of age, was examined in a crowded court, by order of the Judge, as to whether he were really circumcised, or not. We, of course, can see now how Christians might be perfectly honest in denying the charge of Judaism, and yet by the very fact of belonging in many instances to the circumcised Hebrew race, would

¹ 'Life of Domitian,' c. 12: 'Præter cæteros, Judaicus fiscus acerbissime actus est; ad quem deferabantur, qui vel *improfessi Judaicam viverent vitam*, vel dissimulata origine imposita genti tributa non pependissent.'

draw down upon themselves and upon their co-religionists the imputation of dishonesty : which would occasionally at least, be followed by persecution. It would be inferred that they had something to conceal ; and that they were perhaps engaged in secret plots against the government.

We thus see how many things combined to render it expedient that the later Apostolic Church should, especially after the destruction of Jerusalem by Titus, separate herself more and more from the Jewish Synagogue.

CHAPTER IX.

THE PERSECUTION OF THE CHURCH BY TRAJAN—EARLY HISTORY OF THE CHURCH OF JERUSALEM.

THE breaking out of this Persecution certainly introduces us to a new epoch in the history of the Church. Speaking with an allowable latitude, it closes the æra in which those who had seen, or conversed with Christ were yet living on the earth. Of the more celebrated of these, St. John was taken away from the evil to come before the bursting of the storm, St. Ignatius of Antioch, and St. Simeon of Jerusalem, bent beneath its blast, but only to rise up in a new and eternal state of existence. If any very aged persons who had beheld the face of Emmanuel still survived to a period later on in the second century, their lives were passed in such obscurity as to be of no importance in a merely historical point of view.

Coincident with this persecution there is a further circumstance which adds importance to the æra, viewed as a great historical landmark.

It is that, speaking again with an allowable latitude, it forms a convenient boundary line between the supernatural and miraculous period of the Christian Church, and the period when the supernatural becomes immeasurably less prominent.

It may be safely asserted that no one would attempt to write a history of the Catholic Church between A.D. 30, and A.D. 100, without taking supernatural elements into

account ; and this quite independently of their acceptance, or rejection of them as facts.

On the other hand, a History of Christianity might be written, fairly and honestly, although, as most would think, inadequately, from A.D. 110 onwards, by a writer who simply ignored everything miraculous from beginning to end, and who regarded the Christian Church in exactly the same light that he would any other great and influential human institution.

Be this as it may, we cannot help seeing that in Trajan's Persecution, and henceforward, although we may believe that the inner life of the Christian Church was ever sustained and nourished by invisible, and therefore really supernatural gifts and graces, she was left almost entirely to her own strength and her own resources, as it were, to wage her outward warfare against the powers of the world, and the assaults of the devil. Neither her friends, nor her foes would be very forward to assert that she won such victory as she did, when Constantine placed the holy sign upon the standards of the Roman legions, mainly, or chiefly by the aid of supernatural weapons.

One of the most interesting facts connected with the history of the Church, as an Institution whose existence began nigh 2,000 years ago, and which still lives with a life as vigorous as at the first, though under changed conditions, is the way in which light breaks upon us in the early ages from all sources, often even the most unexpected. The wondrous scenes are lighted up, if fitfully, yet very really. We must contemplate the Primitive Church, now in the light shed upon it by the inartistic account of some loving and devoted, but honest partizan, now in the reflection cast by some strange and weird, and long-forgotten heresy, and yet again, by the light as it were

of the sparks emitted in the collision between the unquenchable enthusiasm of the adherents of the new Religion, and the iron will of some shrewd and stern, but not altogether unkindly Roman potentate, like Trajan, or Pliny, with their inflexible determination to stand upon the ancient ways, to keep the wheels of the empire in their accustomed grooves; and resolved that if Christianity would not bend before the majesty of Roman Law, that then, that Law should break its spirit, and crush and trample its young life down into the dust. Yet where is the influence of Trajan and Pliny, and thousands such as they were, now? It is as little felt as that of the men who lived in the days before the Flood. Gone as the thought of a vision of the night: passed as the remembrance of a guest which tarrieth but a day.

And no one can say that such has been as yet the fate of Christianity, or of the Christian Church. And whatever be the marvellous changes, the strange modifications that Christianity as a religious system may have to undergo in the years that are coming on apace, entire overthrow of influence, still less utter extinction, is the last thing which any large or wise and philosophic mind would, in these days, predict as the fate in store for the Church of Jesus Christ.

Such are a few of the reflections which crowd upon us, when Pliny's Letter to Trajan photographs for us, from an adversary's point of view, the appearance which Christianity presented in the Province of Bithynia, very early in the second century, when the last of the Apostles had left the earth.

This persecution under Trajan was the first of those many efforts which were made upon a definite principle to force the new Religion to be contented with a position subordinate to Roman law, and to imperial policy. If

the Church could have been contented with such a status, she would not only have been cheerfully protected, but gladly encouraged as the most efficient system of moral police which had yet appeared. But thus it could never be.

There is at least one element in the Catholic Church, which can no more be amalgamated with the world, can no more shape itself, or be shaped in conformity with the ends and aims of a worldly policy, than iron can mingle with miry clay. It was felt in the Primitive Ages that the Church was a Kingdom, as Christ said it was, although a Kingdom not of this world. And the Roman Emperors had to learn at last that there was another King, one Jesus, a Jew, who had been crucified under Pontius Pilate, whom countless millions of their subjects were, in the last resort, prepared to obey in preference to themselves. Examine Christianity as we will, analyse it, philosophize over it, turn it inside out, and the assertion of this claim to the highest allegiance which the human soul can give will be found as the very inmost core of its heart of hearts. The great and wise Romans may be excused that they could not understand, or recognise the truth of this, until the failure of ten Persecutions had taught them the lesson. But if it had been in human nature to perceive it earlier, the Roman Empire might have escaped dissolution, might have been remoulded into a new and healthier political rejuvenescence.

But a far more important question for the whole world, or at least for Europe, than any relating to bygone ages, to determine, now in this very day and generation of ours is, whether, after all the experience and misery of the past, the same mistake is to be committed over again, and perchance with direr consequences—who can tell—than the break-up of the Roman Empire? There are not a few

signs of the times, which are plain enough to those who will open their eyes to see, that unless the world will recognise, practically at least, the fact of the perfect and absolute independence of the Kingdom of Christ in its own spiritual, invisible sphere, we may be on the very brink of a moral convulsion, of a political chaos, compared with which the confusion and perplexity of the fifth and sixth centuries of our æra were periods of harmony and of peace.

But it is time to turn to the consideration of Pliny's Letter.

It is generally allowed by critics to be a genuine document. We shall assume it to be so, if upon no other ground than this—that its whole tone is decidedly hostile to Christianity. And if we are to reject everything in favour of Christianity because it is in favour, and everything hostile because it is hostile, it is rather difficult to know what materials for history will remain.

It was in Trajan's reign, A.D. 110,¹ that the younger Pliny became governor of the Provinces of Pontus and Bithynia. The duties of his office soon brought him into contact with the rising religious sect. He apparently hoped to deal mercifully but effectually with it, by putting into force a recent Law, or Rescript of Trajan's against *Hetæriæ*, a word for which there is no absolute synonym in the languages of modern Europe, but whose best equivalent is the English 'Club.' The *Hetæriæ* were voluntary associations for any purpose or object whatever, whether religious, political, or otherwise.²

But Pliny was not long in discovering that such legal

¹ This is the date given by Neander. It seems to me a very probable one.

² See Gibbon's interesting account of them.

machinery as rescripts and edicts was insufficient to deal with the work which he had taken in hand. In his perplexity, he writes to his Master a letter, which showed that for the present, he was considerably baffled.

After premising that until he came into his Province, he had never been present at any examinations of Christians, and therefore did not know how far it was customary for them to be punished, or sought after, he proceeds to state several points about which he felt no little hesitation. He did not know whether differences in the age of those accused ought to be taken into consideration; nor whether, if any one expressed sorrow for having been a Christian, he ought to be pardoned on the strength of such repentance. It was also a source of perplexity to him whether Christians were to be punished simply for being Christians, that is, for a mere name, or whether they were to be punished for crimes involved, or supposed to be involved, in the profession or the exercise of their religion.¹

Pending Trajan's reply, he pursued the following course. When any were accused before his tribunal, he asked the persons themselves whether they were Christians. If

¹ Gibbon's treatment of this letter of Pliny's, and indeed of the entire question connected with it, appears to me one of the most unsatisfactory parts of his great work; and certainly most unfair to Christianity, whilst far too indulgent to Pliny. He argues that because Pliny had never been present at any trials of Christians before he went into Bithynia, therefore 'we may be sure there were no general laws, or decrees of the Senate in force against the Christians.' The *non sequitur* is almost ludicrous. He only refers to Pliny's words: 'Cognitionibus de Christianis interfui nunquam.' Had he chosen to read what immediately follows, 'ideo nescio quid, et quatenus aut puniri soleat aut quæri:' he would have seen that there *was* a customary method of proceeding against Christians, perfectly well known to Roman courts of judicature.

they acknowledged that they were, he repeated the question a second and a third time, evidently with the merciful design, on his part, of leaving them as long as possible a chance of escape. If they persisted to the last, he ordered them to be led to punishment.

To what punishment he does not say ; but there is but too much reason to believe that it was the punishment of *death*. Pliny's reason for what he did is a curious one. It shows how much tolerance was to be expected in such a case from one, in whom a philosophic spirit, and a natural kindness of disposition were evidently combined. ' Whatever else might be their fault,' he says, ' I felt that their inflexible obstinacy deserved to be punished.' Certain of the accused were Roman citizens, whom he sent to be tried at Rome. This of itself would seem to show that the profession of Christianity was a capital offence.¹ So far Pliny appears to speak only of those who were really Christians ; but two other classes of persons were accused before him. A schedule was handed in,² containing a multitude of names, but all who were indicated in it denied that they either were then, or ever had been Christians. These persons, at Pliny's suggestion, readily invoked the gods, worshipped with offerings of wine and

¹ When we see that the Roman governor of two important provinces of the Empire ordered persons who were not Roman citizens to be led to execution, and those who were Roman citizens to be carried all the way from Bithynia to Italy for trial, simply because they persevered in a profession of Christianity, to argue as Gibbon tries to do, that there were no laws in existence against Christians, seems to me, either an insult to common sense, or else, to affix a much worse stigma to the character of Pliny than Christian writers have ever ventured to do.

² This schedule (*libellus*) was not attested by any signature (*sine autore*). It is very probable therefore that the names it contained had been inserted by some one, simply as an act of private malice.

incense an image of Trajan, which Pliny, with that fulsome spirit of flattery, which was one of the most sickening features of paganism, had caused to be placed in his hall of justice; and they even did not refuse to revile Christ, none of which things, Pliny says truly enough, any real Christian could possibly be made to do.

Another class were those who were delated by informers. Some of these at first owned themselves to be Christians, and then, terrified probably by the threats of the Judge, denied it. They allowed that they had been Christians once, but had ceased to be so, some three, or more years, others as many as twenty. If this last statement on the part of these apostates were true, they must have been Christians more than ten years before the death of the Apostle St. John. All these worshipped the images of Trajan and the gods, and, alas! for poor weak, human nature, cursed Christ, although as Polycarp said to his Judge, 'He had never done them any harm.' And that this crucified Lord Jesus whom Pliny made them curse, had ever done them only good, they showed by words which might, one would have thought, have opened the eyes of one even less wise than Pliny, if the children of this world could by wisdom have known God.¹

They affirmed that when they were Christians, the utmost extent of their fault, or their error, or whatever it was, consisted in assembling on a stated day, before the light, and singing, in a manner which was afterwards called antiphonally, a hymn to Christ as God: further than this, they bound themselves by a solemn vow not to

¹ Gibbon complains that Pliny has been rather hardly dealt with by some Christian writers. I confine myself as closely as possible to a narrative of facts, as related by himself; and I cannot conceive of a severer condemnation.

commit any wickedness, such as lying, cheating, theft, or adultery.¹ After this religious service they dispersed, to come together at a later period of the day, to partake in common of a simple and harmless meal: and even this they had discontinued after Pliny's publication of the Emperor's edict against *Hetæriæ*.

Then comes the worst condemnation of the writer in the tale as told by himself.

Pliny, in order to arrive, as he supposed he thus might, at the exact truth, is not ashamed to say that he put to examination under torture, two maidens, who were called *ministrae*, by which Deaconesses, or other female members of the Christian Clergy, is undoubtedly meant.² But even then he could discover nothing beyond what he calls an inordinate and gloomy superstition.³ In this perplexity he applied to Trajan as a last resource. It is evident that he grasped the magnitude of the interests involved, in a worldly and temporal point of view. However the spread of Christianity might be ignored for the present,

¹ And this religion of purity was what the amiable Pliny was striving to put down, whilst in another province of Asia Minor such unutterable orgies of lust and filth as the following were protected by law. *Δηους δὲ μυστήρια καὶ Διὸς πρὸς μητέρα Δήμητραν ἀφροδίσσιοι συμπλοκαὶ καὶ μῆνις, οὐκ οἷδ' ὅτι φῶ λαιπόν, μητρὸς ἢ γυναικὸς, τῆς Δηοῦς, ἧς ἐὶ χάριν Βριμῶ προσαγορευθῆναι λέγεται, ἱκετηρίαι Διός, καὶ πόμα χολῆς καὶ καρδιουλκίαι καὶ ἀρρήτουργίαι· ταῦτα οἱ Φρύγες τελίσκουσιν* Ἀττιδὶ καὶ Κυβέλλῃ.—Clem. Alex. Protrept. ii. 15.

² It has been much too hastily taken for granted that these *ministrae* were only deaconesses. They are just as likely to have been female apostles, like Junia (Rom. xvi. 7), or Thekla, or female bishops, or presbyters. Indeed the absence of any mention by Pliny of Christian ministers of the other sex, inclines me to the belief that the Church of Bithynia was served chiefly by a female priesthood. But see the whole question of the female Ministry of the early Church discussed in the 'History of Montanism,' chaps. xv. xvi. xvii.

³ Cf. Acts xxv. 19.

at Rome, and in some other parts of the Empire, no reflecting mind could be blind to the fact, that it was rapidly becoming the prevailing, if not the only religion of Bithynia. ‘Many of all ages, all ranks, and of both sexes were called into peril.’ ‘The contagion,’ as he termed it, ‘of the new superstition pervaded not only the cities, but had spread to the villages, and even to the open country.’¹ Still he was of opinion that its further spread might be arrested; might perhaps be put down altogether. Vain delusion. Because under the terror produced by his tortures of innocent women, and the execution of such as could not be induced to curse Christ, he saw the desolate Temples begin to be filled, buyers of hogs and other animals for sacrifice make their appearance once more in the markets, he was hopeful that what was indeed a ‘baleful superstition’ might be propped up by the secular arm, and its glories revived by a zealous exertion of state authority. He concludes by telling Trajan that he is fully persuaded, that the great mass of his subjects might still be brought to amendment, if a place of repentance were allowed them. Poor Pliny! It is not perhaps really to be wondered at, and yet we cannot help feeling a certain strangeness at the thought, that not so much as a glimmering of the rights, much less of the majesty of the human soul, had ever crossed his

¹ This mention of Christianity pervading the villages and the country districts of Bithynia and Pontus is to my own mind almost conclusive evidence, that the Churches of these Provinces were, what began to be called a few years afterwards, Montanist communities. The so-called Catholic or hierarchical Church never made much way amongst the *pagani* in Ante-Nicene times. It was Christianity in its Montanist aspect, with its spirit of freedom, and its burning zeal, and its touching ritual, and its intense love for the Apocalypse of St. John, and even its severe asceticism, which won the hearts of the peasantry, throughout the Roman Empire.

mind. How wonderful that every wretched slave in Bithynia had inalienable rights of conscience, in the spheres of religion and morals, compared with which the might of Roman Law, and the pomp and splendour of Roman imperial dignity was as the small dust of the balance—rights which Roman Emperors and Magistrates must acknowledge, or else themselves perish for ever in the vain struggle to contend against them.

I put it to philosophy, I put it to the world, I ask it with the earnestness of a question into which I would throw my very soul in the asking, can Christianity ever be deemed a failure in this world of ours, when it has done what it has done for the human conscience? I do not argue that the action of the Christian Church has always been what it ought to have been in this respect: far, very far from it. The Church in practice, alas, has too often been little, if any better than the heathen persecutors of old. But this I do say, that the race of mankind owes it mainly to Christianity that such a thing as conscience, in matters pertaining to religion, has ever been recognised as a principle at all.

Even now, we are far enough from what we ought to be in this respect. Sooner or later, the principle will be just as universally acknowledged, as the wickedness of persecution on account of religion is now, that the favouring, or upholding, or establishing, or patronising any one particular religious body by the State is inconsistent with a perfect belief in the rights of conscience. But for the practical application of this principle, the mass of mankind are evidently for the present, far from ripe. And in the meanwhile, those who are wise will be content patiently to sow the seed of true principles, and wait for that harvest of recognition and application, which the unfolding ages will surely bring with them.

As we muse over Pliny's Letter, deep consolation will spring up out of the thought, that there are throughout Christendom myriads upon myriads, who hold as dearer than any earthly life that principle of the liberty of the individual conscience, of which the polished heathen philosopher had never dreamed—and which, if he had, he would have treated as 'a depraved and gloomy superstition.' That serfs, bound to the clod, female slaves, old and ugly, that they should have a something within, undefinable and intangible, which made them refuse to bow down to the image of the mighty Cæsar, lord of a hundred legions, or to put a few grains of frankincense in an innocent-looking vessel called a censer, was too ridiculous, too absurd. The Proconsul's morning administration of justice would have broken up with a moderate indulgence of laughter, befitting philosophers, but that the refusal of these wretched Christians argued obstinacy. And the punishment of their obstinacy was at the Judge's discretion; and that discretion was torture and *death*. Yes, the world certainly has made a few steps in advance since then—even if they are but very few.

Such are some of the reflections which Pliny's Letter must bring home to every thoughtful mind.

Trajan's reply was sensible and straightforward. He did not enter into any questions of right or wrong. He simply recommended a just, but not severe application of the existing laws.

'You have done right, my Pliny, in the way in which you have dealt with the Christians, who have been accused before you.

'No exact formula can be laid down for your guidance in the matter. These people are not to be sought after; but if they are brought before you, and convicted, they

must be punished.¹ At the same time remember, that whoever denies being a Christian, and gives proof that he is not, by making supplication to our gods, such a person must be pardoned for the sake of his repentance, even though it may be suspected that he has been a Christian in time past. Anonymous accusations must be utterly disregarded. To pay any attention to them would be a very dangerous precedent, and unworthy of our age.'

These Letters afford an opportunity to Tertullian for the exercise of his scathing sarcasm. And indeed it does seem simply inexplicable that Pliny and Trajan did not themselves see the almost ludicrous light in which they were placing themselves.

Unless they had told us so themselves, we could not have believed that the profession of Christianity was, in their eyes, a crime sufficiently grave to be punished with death, if those who were Christians spoke the truth, but no crime at all, supposing that they chose to deny it, in other words to lie. It shows us convincingly enough that educated heathens did not really believe in the Thyestean banquets, and the Œdipodean unions, of which the Christians were popularly accused.

Pliny's Letter shows further, that the writer, with all his efforts, had not been able to make himself acquainted even with Christian discipline and practices, much less to obtain the slightest knowledge of Christian doctrine. Who could expect to arrive at such an end by means of torture? Of the two classes of people who were brought before him, those who persisted in their profession, and were led to execution, and those who denied

¹ This surely is conclusive as to the existence of laws against the Christians *quà* Christians, although the nature of the punishment was left to the discretion of the magistrate. The only possible alternative would be to accuse Pliny and Trajan of *lawlessness*.

Christ, and were set at liberty, it is extremely probable that none of the latter had advanced beyond the position of catechumens. We who know what the discipline of the Primitive Church was, can understand the account which was given to Pliny, though he could not do so. The assembling together on a stated day, was for the celebration of the Eucharist upon the Lord's Day.

The singing hymns to Christ as God, and the oath, or vow to abstain from sin, was the preliminary portion of the Service at which catechumens were allowed to be present. After this they were dismissed, and knew absolutely nothing of what followed. Their coming together again at a later period of the day, to partake of a simple meal in common, amounts almost to a demonstration, that by the beginning of the second century, the Eucharist, in Asia Minor at least, had been severed from the Agape; and instead of being received after it, was celebrated as a religious service by itself, commencing with the Sunday morning dawn.

To show how strictly the *Disciplina Arcani* was preserved, even as late as the close of the fourth century, we find St. Augustine saying, that if you were to ask a catechumen whether he believed in Christ, he would sign his forehead with the sign of the Cross, and answer readily, 'I believe : ' but if you were to ask him—' Dost thou eat the Flesh of the Son of Man, and drink His Blood?' he would not understand what you were saying.¹

There is some difficulty in ascertaining the exact meaning of the early Christians binding themselves by an oath to abstain from certain sins. There is no portion of any extant Liturgy which seems to refer to any such ceremony. The suggestion of an eminent scholar,² that the

¹ Tract xi. in Joan.

² Archdeacon Freeman.

recital of the Ten Commandments in the English Communion Office may have had its counterpart in the Eucharistic Services of the Primitive Church, is a very ingenious one. Unfortunately it is unsupported by a tittle of evidence. It is just possible that the Oath may have been connected with the solemn renunciation of the devil, which took place in Baptism. The words in which this was done, as given by Tertullian,¹ are probably the very oldest liturgical formula which has been preserved to us. In one shape, or other, more or less ample, this renunciation appears to have been universal. The churches of Bithynia may have employed one of the more prolix forms, pledging the neophyte to the renunciation of all the works of Satan, as well as of Satan himself. And as those who gave evidence before Pliny do not appear to have been as yet baptized Christians, we may suppose that the Baptismal renunciation was explained to them in lectures and catechetical instructions, as being of the same nature as a military oath, or sacrament, by which they would pledge themselves to be faithful soldiers of Jesus Christ to fight against the devil and sin. In the religious assemblies at which they were present, they would be told by the Presidents what they would have to undertake if they became Christians, and the question might be put to them, sometimes individually, sometimes collectively, whether or not they were willing thus to bind themselves.

If Pliny were unable to extract much information from the voluntary confessions of the Catechumens, still less would he gain from the torture-extracted depositions of the deaconesses. His letter apparently intimates, that it

¹ 'Aquam adituri, ibidem, sed et aliquanto prius in ecclesia sub antistitis manu, contestamur nos renuntiare diabolo et pompæ, et angelis ejus.'—De Coronâ.

was in order to obtain further light than the former could, or would throw upon Christian habits, that he proceeded to put the deaconesses to the torture.

The only result, as he says, was that ‘they appeared to be under the influence of a gloomy superstition.’ It would be very interesting if the questions put to them, and their replies had been preserved. But we know enough of similar interrogations, to be able to conjecture very nearly what would happen. They would, like St. Paul, speak of one Jesus as alive, whom Pliny knew to be dead, for had He not been crucified under a Roman governor, Pontius Pilate, the records of whose procuratorship were still preserved in the archives of the capital, and which Pliny might have read for himself? And if he went on to ask them, how they could give themselves up to the worship of a dead man, they may have answered him in the very words of Paul himself—‘Christ being raised from the dead, dieth no more, death hath no more dominion over Him, for in that He died, He died for sin once; but in that He liveth, He liveth unto God.’ And for themselves, they may have told him, that ‘they indeed were dead, but that their life was hid with Christ in God.’ When we come to think of such passages of Scripture, and of hundreds like them, passages which are household words throughout Christendom—and it is this which blinds us to their passing strangeness—we shall cease to wonder that Pliny could discover in Christianity nothing but a gloomy and inordinate superstition.

Eusebius appears to have been unacquainted with the original letter of Pliny, and to have derived his knowledge of it from Tertullian’s remarks in his *Apology*.

It is a charge which has been frequently brought against ecclesiastical writers, and hagiographers, that they have been disposed to magnify the number of martyrs, far

beyond what is fairly warranted by facts. This is perfectly true; and instances of such multiplication will readily occur to every one. But candour ought to make us take notice of the occasional operation, to speak within bounds, of an entirely opposite process.

This letter furnishes a notable instance. There cannot be a reasonable doubt that some considerable number of persons suffered death under Pliny, in Pontus and Bithynia, for the profession of Christianity, or as he said, for their obstinacy. Yet these true martyrs are commemorated in no kalendar: their very names are unknown on earth: and but for the writing in that mystic scroll which the Apocalypse calls ‘the Lamb’s Book of Life,’ all trace and record of them and their confession would have perished utterly and for ever from the universe of God. Can any one say with certainty, that the number of the *unknown* Martyrs is as small as Gibbon and others would endeavour to make it?

This persecution under Trajan seems to have been preceded and accompanied by popular tumults raised against the Christians, first in one place, and then in another. The causes of these commotions are exceedingly obscure, and will probably never be determined with any exactness: but there are some reasons for conjecturing that they were connected with the unsettled state of the Jews throughout the Roman Empire, which led to their making their last phrenzied struggle under Barchochebas in the following reign.

We may trace the hand of Divine Providence in the circumstance, that, as far as we can tell, all the persons then upon earth, who could lay an indisputable claim ‘to belong to the house and lineage of David,’ were professing Christians. If the Jews had had an ambitious and able descendant of their royal house for their leader,

instead of the half-maniac, half-charlatan Barchochebas, the result of their appalling insurrection under Adrian might possibly have terminated differently from what it did. But it must not be. 'Jerusalem was to be trodden down of the Gentiles until the times of the Gentiles were fulfilled.'

Eusebius thus relates the first mutterings of the storm which broke upon the Church somewhere about the commencement of the second century.¹

'The tradition is, that persecution was raised against us in Trajan's reign in various provinces and cities by means of popular tumults. In this persecution, Symeon, the son of Cleophas, who, as we have before related, was appointed the second bishop of the Church in Jerusalem, ended his life by martyrdom. Hegesippus, from whom we have quoted at various times, is our authority for this. He says that Symeon being still alive at this period, was charged as a Christian, by certain heretics, with various offences. He endured tortures for many days, and astonished both the judge and those who were about him, at the constancy with which he bore them. He suffered death in a manner very like unto the Lord Himself.'²

The exact words of Hegesippus are as follows: 'Some of these heretics charged Symeon, the son of Cleophas,

¹ I would here say, that to attempt to settle the exact year of many of the events in very early ecclesiastical history, appears to me something almost like a waste of time. It is scarcely ever a point of importance, whether an event took place, A.D. 105 or 106, or another event in 119 or 120. Those who feel interested in exact chronology should consult Tillemont. He examines and discusses every possible date with immense learning, and with a patience and a diligence which never wearies, at least himself.

² This is explained by a further quotation from Hegesippus, to mean crucifixion, *ἐκελεύσθη σταυρωθῆναι*.

with being of the race of David, and a Christian. Thus he became a martyr, being 120 years old, in the reign of Trajan, when Atticus, who was of consular dignity, was governor.'

He adds, that the accusers themselves did not escape; for a search being made about this time for the descendants of David, they were seized as belonging to the royal race of Judah.

It may reasonably be thought, that Symeon was one of those who had both seen and heard the Lord. The proofs of this are the great age to which his life was prolonged, and the mention in the Gospels of Mary, the wife of Cleophas, of whom he was a son.¹

After the relation of St. Symeon's martyrdom, Eusebius proceeds to make a statement, also based upon Hegesippus, which has occasioned great perplexity to ecclesiastical historians.

He says, that 'until this time the Church had remained pure and uncorrupted by heresies; and on account of this purity was called a Virgin.' He subsequently² quotes Hegesippus to the same effect. 'After James the Just had suffered martyrdom, Symeon, the son of Cleophas, the Lord's uncle,³ is appointed bishop. All were in favour of his being made the second bishop. He was a cousin of the Lord. They used to call the Church a Virgin, because it had not yet been corrupted by vain

¹ Eusebius, still quoting Hegesippus, says that the grandsons of Jude survived as Presidents of Churches until this time. They do not appear to have been put to death. H. E. iii. 32.

² *Ibid.* iv. 22.

³ 'Ὁ ἐκ θείου. I have translated this as it seems to be usually understood. But I am far from satisfied. The expression occurs elsewhere in Hegesippus, and seems to me capable of meaning, 'by a divine command.'

doctrines, or traditions.¹ The originator of these was Thebuthis. He began secretly to corrupt the Church, because he had not been made bishop.'

Hegesippus then proceeds to speak of the Seven Jewish Sects. And he mentions in addition several of those sects, which are more usually denominated heretics, the followers of Menander, Marcion, Carpocrates, the Valentinians, Basileidians, and Saturnilians: adding that 'each secretly introduced his own private opinions, all differing one from another. From thence sprung false Christs, false Prophets, false Apostles. These divided the unity of the Church, through the corrupt words which they spake against God, and against His Christ.'

Most critics seem to be of opinion, that by that Church which remained a pure Virgin, the whole Catholic Church of Christ is to be understood. But this is impossible. Heresy was strong in many places long before the close of the first century. And the words of Hegesippus, so far as any definite meaning can be extracted from them, appear to refer exclusively to the Church of Jerusalem. And even in this restricted application, it is difficult to understand how he could venture to state, that heresies had never openly raised their heads amongst the Christian Israelites before the reign of Trajan. Undoubted facts point, we should think, to a different conclusion, even if we had no other guide than the very statements which we have quoted from Hegesippus himself.

Perhaps, upon the whole, the safest conclusion to come to is, to suppose that he meant, speaking in his own rambling manner, nothing more than that the Church of Jerusalem, under the presidency of two such holy apo-

¹ Ἀκούει παραίται. All this is very closely connected with the history of the Ebionites, a subject which will be fully treated of later on.

stolic men as St. James and St. Symeon, remained during their lifetime *comparatively* pure and uncorrupt, and that it was for that reason distinguished by the honourable title of the Virgin Church. This appears the simplest and most natural explanation.

This will be a good place to give a brief continuation of the external history of the orthodox Church of Jerusalem, subsequent to the death of St. James the Just.¹

There seems to be no reason for doubting the truth of the tradition that all the surviving Apostles and Disciples of Christ came together to Jerusalem, after St. James's martyrdom, to elect a successor. This is related by Eusebius.² But in his account there is another instance of that carelessness which throws such an air of uncertainty over almost the whole of early Church History. He says, that this assemblage, in which, as we have seen, St. Symeon was appointed St. James's successor, took place *after* the capture of Jerusalem by Titus.

But there are several reasons which render it, as nearly as possible, absolutely certain that this Council, if it were held at all, as we believe it was, must have taken place *before* the destruction of the holy city, A.D. 70.

We know that St. James died two or three years at least before the siege by Titus. We know that at some time during this breathing space the Christian Church of Jerusalem fled to Pella across the Jordan. Is it in the least likely that they did so without any recognised head, any religious chief? Again, it is by no means certain that the Christian community, which removed to Pella, ever returned to Jerusalem at all, until it was rebuilt two generations afterwards in Adrian's reign, and received the

¹ Its internal history will be found in the chapter on the Ebionites.

² H. E. iii. 11.

name of Elia Capitolina. But even supposing that when things became a little more settled on the western side of Jordan, after the withdrawal of the Roman armies, the Christians did return from Pella to Jerusalem, several years must have elapsed before they could have been in a position to hold a Council of all the still surviving original founders of the Catholic Church. The number of these founders must, by that time, have been reduced to a very few; yet Eusebius says, speaking of the time when Symeon was elected, ‘there were many who had seen the Lord still alive on the earth.’

All things combine to make us think, that the election to the vacant See of the Mother Church of Christendom took place almost immediately after St. James’s death. Then, when shortly afterwards the Christians saw Jerusalem encompassed with the army of Cestius Gallus, when they saw that army, contrary to all human probability, beaten back in a disgraceful rout, they knew what others knew not, that the long-deferred vengeance upon the city in which was found, mystically, the blood of all the prophets and all the saints, was nigh at hand. Then they raised the cry—‘Let us depart hence;’ a cry soon to be repeated by the voices of the Guardian Angels, saying at midnight, as with the voice of a mighty multitude, sounding from the innermost court of the Temple, ‘Let us too depart hence.’¹

Thus then the Christian community in Decapolis, on the left bank of the Jordan, would be called the Church of Jerusalem. But it seems to have exercised, year after

¹ St. Epiphanius says distinctly that the Christian community which fled to Pella, did not return to Jerusalem until the reign of Adrian. Epiphanius is, of course, no great authority for such a fact; but he appears to me to have studied the history of the Ebionites with unusual interest and care.

year, less and less influence upon the Church at large. The difficulty of communication would be one great cause of this. The developement of the Ebionite heresy, and the formalizing of the Nazarene party within the bosom of this Church would be another depressing cause.

Before giving an account of the Ebionites, as I shall do in the next chapter, it may be well to make some observations upon that gathering together of the personal disciples of Jesus, for the last time on earth, which took place in the city of Jerusalem, before its destruction. The only object which is expressly assigned by ancient authors for this assemblage, is, as we have seen, the election of St. Symeon. But it is scarcely possible that such a venerable body of men, should have met together, and then dispersed, without taking counsel respecting the welfare of the whole Catholic Church of Christ. They knew that in the course of nature, after the lapse of a very few years, there would not be a single survivor of all who had seen the Lord in the flesh. They knew by experience how difficult it was for the Churches to cope with the heresies which were perpetually springing up, even when Apostles were at hand, whose authority to decide between truth and falsehood, every professing Christian was ready, to some extent, to acknowledge. Most anxiously then would they reflect upon the probable condition of things, when they should be no more seen of men.

There is then a strong antecedent probability, that the matters treated of in this Second Council of Jerusalem would be of as much importance as that vital question¹ which was decided in the First Council held in that city. It is a great misfortune that all records, upon which we

¹ The determination that Gentiles who were converted to Christianity, were not to be circumcised, and were not to be bound by the Jewish ceremonial law.

could with any certainty rely, have perished. Had it been otherwise, numberless controversies might have been saved. In the absence of knowledge, conjecture has been busy. It has been thought by some, that it was at this time that the Apostles gave a formal sanction to the Episcopal method of Church government. There is nothing inherently improbable in such a supposition. Only, as it is unsupported by any direct early evidence, seriously to discuss it, would be waste of time.

There is however one most remarkable fragment of Irenæus, discovered as recently as the beginning of the last century¹ which may refer to this Council of which we are now speaking.

The passage itself is so valuable, that it will be well to give it in this place :

“Those who have become acquainted with the secondary Constitutions² of the Apostles are aware that the Lord ordained a new Oblation in the new Covenant, according to the prophecy of Malachi. “For from the rising of the sun unto the going down of the same, my Name is glorified among the Gentiles, and in every place incense is offered unto my Name, and a pure Offering.” Thus also John saith in the Apocalypse—“The incense is the prayers of the Saints.” Paul also exhorts us to “present our bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable to God, which is our

¹ By the learned Lutheran Pfaff, in the Royal Library at Turin.

² Ταῖς δευτέραις τῶν Ἀποστόλων διατάξεσι. The conjectures of critics, as to the exact meaning of these words, are almost numberless. I should be inclined to add one more, and suggest that the fragment does not really belong to Irenæus; but to some later writer, who was either himself taken in by the wretched forgery of the Apostolical Constitutions, or else wished to prop up that work, but that the *doctrine* implied in the fragment seems to me much more like what we find in the undoubted writings of Irenæus, than it does that of a good deal of the Apostolical Constitutions.

reasonable service." And again, it is said, "Let us offer the sacrifice of praise, that is to say, the fruit of our lips." These offerings indeed are not according to the Law, whose handwriting the Lord has blotted out, and taken it out of the way; but according to the Spirit, for we "must worship God in Spirit and in truth."

'Therefore the offering of the Eucharist is not a fleshly but a spiritual oblation, and thus it is pure.'

'We offer unto God the bread of blessing, and the cup of blessing, giving thanks unto Him; for He hath commanded the earth to bring forth these fruits for our food. And when we have accomplished this offering, we call upon the Holy Spirit, that He would show forth this sacrifice, even the bread, as the Body of Christ, and the cup as the Blood of Christ, that they who partake of these Antitypes may obtain remission of sins and everlasting life.'¹

'They then who celebrate these offerings in commemoration of the Lord, do not enter into the doctrines of the Jews; but ministering after a spiritual manner, they shall be called the sons of Wisdom.'

What then are we to understand by these secondary, or subsequent Constitutions of the Apostles? Dogmatism upon the point is of course out of the question. With our present materials for coming to a decision, no one ought to advance beyond a probable conjecture.

¹ It is right to inform the English reader, that there is no word in the original, corresponding to 'as,' in this clause, 'as the Body of Christ,' 'as the Blood of Christ.' I have inserted it for two reasons: 1. Because, I think it is scarcely English without it. And, 2. Because this particular passage appears to me to be subjective, and the reference to the sending down of the Holy Ghost upon the Eucharistic gifts, to be a reference to that *second* descent of the Holy Spirit, which we have noticed in the Liturgy of St. Mark, as being prayed for after consecration, for a *subjective* purpose. See page 123.

But it certainly does not seem incredible that the words refer to some definite instruction and advice given by the survivors of the Apostolic College, as a whole, to the Catholic Church, as a whole. If the probability of such instruction be admitted, there will be little difficulty in the further admission, that the most probable period for it to have been given was at this Second Council of Jerusalem. In the action of the former Council, two things appear plainly manifest. 1. That though the Apostles had by that time learnt thoroughly the teaching of Christ, that His Kingdom was not, and could not be of this world, yet they were inclined to make Jerusalem the head and centre of that new Kingdom, that Christian Theocracy, which was to be wholly spiritual. There are many indications tending to show, that the Apostles designed, if it should prove in accordance with the Divine will, to make Jerusalem, the Metropolis, the spiritual Mother of the new world-wide Family of God.¹

2. In strict agreement with this policy, the action of that Council was wholly negative. It aimed simply at breaking down all barriers, and removing all unnecessary restrictions, which interfered with the Gentiles becoming fellow heirs with the Jews upon equal terms, in the fulness of spiritual privileges. But so far as the corporate action of the Church was concerned, nothing was done at that time to afford any guidance to the infant Christian communities, as to the way in which from henceforth they were to render unto the Father, through Christ, in every place, from the rising to the setting sun, that acceptable worship, of which the Lord Himself had spoken in His

¹ The idea therefore of Rome being a head and a centre for the Christian Family was necessarily a kind of afterthought on the part of Christians, but a very early one.

conversation with the woman of Samaria. All regulations bearing upon this vital question appear to have been left to the Apostolic founders of the several Churches.

But those who were assembled, but a few years afterwards, to elect a successor to St. James, found themselves face to face with a wholly different order of things ; they gazed out abroad from the hills of Sion upon a new moral and spiritual world. The pleasing dream, that the earthly Jerusalem might, in God's Providence, become the spiritual Mother, not the Mistress, of God's whole family here below, was for ever at an end. They knew, whether by the spirit of prophecy still abiding in the Church, as Eusebius seems to intimate,¹ or by the message of an angel, as Epiphanius says, or what is more probable than either, by comparing the signs of the times with the predictions of their Divine Master Christ, that the desolation of Jerusalem was nigh at hand, and that that desolation would last until the times of the Gentiles should be fulfilled, in other words until the Second Advent, whether that Advent should be shortly accomplished, or long delayed : for this they knew not.

Hence how natural, and antecedently reasonable it was, that the surviving Disciples should feel a call to lay down a few plain simple rules for the guidance, in the way of Divine Worship, of the Church militant here on earth, which they themselves were so soon about to exchange for the Church triumphant in heaven.

If they did make any such regulations, or recommendations, the only distinct and written record, which has been preserved of them, must be sought for in the passage which has been quoted from Irenæus. And en-

¹ Κατὰ τινα χρησμόν τοῖς αὐτόθι δοκίμοις δι' ἀποκαλύψεως ἐκδοθέντα. H. E. iii. 5.

deavouring to look at that passage, wholly apart from controversy, apart from passion and prejudice, apart, so far as may be, from all subsequent developments of doctrine and worship, to what does it fairly amount? What is its evident significance? It seems to be this. Now that all the Mosaic ritual, all the Levitical sacrifices, all the Temple worship, were about to be done away, not by their will, nor by their means, but by the Providence of God, working in and through the course of earthly events, the Disciples recommended as the substitute for all those things, the Eucharistic Oblation.

Words spoken by Christ would be brought to their remembrance, words whose full significance they had not understood at the time, but which became clearer and clearer with the lapse of years.

‘With desire I have desired to eat this Passover with you before I suffer: for I say unto you, that I will not from henceforth eat thereof until it be fulfilled in the Kingdom of God.’ ‘I will not drink of this fruit of the Vine until the Kingdom of God shall come.’¹

A plain inference to be deduced from such words seems to be, that there was to be a mode of Christian worship which was to be the substitute for all those ordinances of the Jewish Ritual, which the prescient eye of the Saviour saw were coming to an end.

There was to be another sacrifice, a new oblation, changed, and yet still, in some sense, the same. For Christ ‘came not to destroy the Law, but to fulfil.’ But the most important bearing which the establishment of the Eucharistic Oblation would have for Christians to the end of time, would be its affording them a special means whereby they might meet their Lord.

¹ St. Luke xxii. 18.

Since this History is presented to the Church in the humble, though most fervent hope that it may be a true Eirenicon, and an attempt to demonstrate, that so far as the annals of the Apostolic and Sub-apostolic Church are concerned, there is absolutely nothing which need divide those who believe that ‘God was manifested in the Flesh,’ one from another, all controversy is avoided, as much as it is possible to do so. And it does seem to me, that upon this great question of the Eucharist, all parties, all sects, all Churches might be united upon the basis of these words of that great Saint, whose name was the outward index of his Christ-like, peace-loving soul.

Whilst endeavouring to present the Primitive Church as she really was, and to keep back nothing which may enable the thoughtful student of history to judge for himself, yet it cannot be wrong to linger with the lingering of affection, longest over the passages which have a tendency to promote peace and harmony and goodwill.

It is my firm conviction, a conviction which I may as well state here as elsewhere, for it is a conviction which has been formed, after endeavouring, for years, to live and breathe in the atmosphere of Primitive Christianity, that there is not one single sect which now exists in Christendom, in which moral purity is maintained, with perhaps two exceptions, which would not have been embraced, as a dear child, within the bosom of the early Primitive Church, a bosom overflowing with the love of God, for it was indeed the finite expression of the infinite Love, a manifestation in time of the eternal Compassion. The two exceptions which honesty compels me to make, are the Unitarians, and the Society of Friends. And yet even with respect to these, I cannot absolutely make up my mind that they would certainly have been cast out of the visible Church, at least, previous to A.D. 150, or

160. This hesitation is based, in the instance of the Unitarians, upon the whole history of the Ebionites, viewed especially in the light of their connection with the orthodox Churches of Jerusalem and Pella.¹ With reference to the Society of Friends, there can, I imagine, be no question that an unsacramental system, or a system which dispensed with sacraments altogether, would have been viewed with great disfavour by the early Church. Still, on the whole, I am disposed to think disapprobation would have been manifested, not by cutting off any who believed in Jesus as the Son of God, and led holy lives, from outward communion with the one Body, but by rebuking them for not being in accordance with the rest of the believing brethren.

As for other so-called Sects, such as Lutherans, Calvinists, Moravians, on the Continent of Europe; Independents, Baptists, Methodists, in England and America, I have no hesitation in saying, that two great innovations upon primitive spirit and primitive practice are alone answerable for such Christian Communities being in a state of separation from the Catholic, or Universal Church at all.

One of these innovations was the invention and growth of the system of Canon Law, commencing with the tremendous forgery of the Apostolic Constitutions, a forgery with which what is itself a creature of Canon Law, the later form of Diocesan Episcopacy, is closely connected.

The other is the so-called establishment of the Church by Constantine, but which might be much more properly called an establishment of the *temporal* power of the Episcopate.

We may see in the history of the Church of Alexandria,

¹ See the next Chapter.

how strong was the desire on the part of the able and politic Patriarchs of that Church, to be able to coerce those who differed from them, or were unwilling to submit in all things to their jurisdiction, and with what fervour they welcomed the aid of the temporal sword of the Roman Emperor to overthrow and punish their opponents.

Could we transplant the Primitive Church into the Nineteenth Century, there would still undoubtedly be sects outside the one Body, sects with which it would hold no spiritual communion, or intercourse. But they would be such sects as the so-called Family of Love, or the followers of Joseph Smith. They would be sects such as had their prototypes in the Simonians and the Carpo-craticans.

To return to the fragment of Irenæus, it is worth noticing that the chief doubts as to its authenticity appear to come from a quarter, from whence we should scarcely have expected them to arise—learned Roman Catholics. Without laying any very great stress upon the deficiency in the external evidence, they are of opinion, that the great St. Irenæus, the disciple of St. Polycarp, could scarcely have been its author, because the statements which it contains, respecting the Holy Eucharist, are less strong than what is found elsewhere in the undoubted works of the same writer.

This kind of negative evidence is always most unreliable, whichever be the side on which it may be urged. It is of such a nature, that as it is incapable of anything like decisive proof, so it is also incapable of absolute disproof. In estimating its weight it is difficult to see how any one can escape being influenced, consciously, or unconsciously, by preconceived opinions.

Thus in the present instance, still speaking only of this

subjective evidence, many persons would be inclined to accept the fragment as genuine for the very reason that disposes some Roman Catholics to reject it, because, that is, of its less strong and dogmatic tone.

It may perhaps be urged in its favour, that it does not so much profess to be a representation by St. Irenæus of his own belief or opinion upon the subject in question, as to be a statement of what might be gathered from a consideration of the 'Secondary Constitutions' of the Apostles. Viewed in this light, it is sufficient that it should not present any substantial disagreement with the known sentiments of Irenæus, as he has expressed them elsewhere. And that there is no such absolute disagreement, is acknowledged by the Roman Catholic writers alluded to.

As I have said, my great object is, to lay stress upon all those passages in primitive Christian writers which may have a tendency to heal the unhappy divisions of Christendom.

Perfectly convinced as I have been myself by a study of Christian antiquity, as a whole, that the Primitive Church was, in the main, large-hearted, wise, free, and tolerant, it is naturally a pleasant task to point out to others, and to dwell with affection myself upon those facts, and those passages which have led me to such a conclusion.

The Primitive Church stood upon no narrower base than the doctrine of the Incarnation of the Son of God in the Person of Jesus Christ. And a wider, or a broader foundation than that, she could not, because she ought not to have had.

And it is one of the hopeful signs of the possibility of reunion amongst 'all who profess and call themselves Christians,' that all, or nearly all of every sect and party

would attach some weight, and some authority to words which they were persuaded, after examination, had been spoken, or written by a Clement of Rome, an Ignatius of Antioch, an Irenæus of Gaul.

All, or very nearly all would allow, that such saints and martyrs of Jesus could not have departed very far, in spirit and intention at least, from the will of the Divine Teacher.

By such considerations partly, we may be led to think that there is no real discrepancy between this fragment of Irenæus, and those other undisputed passages of his, in which he speaks of the Eucharistic Oblation.

Thus in his work against Heresies, he lays down, at considerable length, the intimations which God had already given under the Older Dispensation of His approbation of a spiritual worship.¹

‘The Prophets,’ he says, ‘indicate in the plainest manner, that God had no need of any slavish obedience: it was for their own good that He enjoined upon the Israelites certain observances in the Law. And when God perceived that they neglected righteousness, and abstained from the love of God, and imagined that He was to be propitiated by sacrifices, and other typical observances, Samuel spoke even thus—“Hath the Lord as great delight in burnt-offerings and sacrifices as in obeying the voice of the Lord? Behold to obey is better than

¹ IV. 17. As the foregoing remarks are addressed to large-hearted Protestants, so what follows is addressed chiefly to large-hearted Roman Catholics, for in longing for the union of all who name the Name of Christ, I need scarcely say that I am not one who would leave Greek, or Roman, or Anglican Catholics outside in the cold, as some writers of Eirenicons would leave all non-episcopal Christians, or hand them over to be dealt with according to some marvellous scheme called ‘the uncovenanted mercies.’

sacrifice, and to hearken than the fat of rams." David also says—"Sacrifice and offering Thou wouldest not, but mine ears hast Thou perfected: burnt-offerings for sin hast Thou not required." Thus he teaches that God desires obedience, which renders men safe, not sacrifices and whole burnt-offerings, which avail nothing towards righteousness.

'Still more clearly does he speak of these things in the fifty-first Psalm—"Thou desirest no sacrifice, else would I give it Thee, but Thou delightest not in burnt-offerings. The sacrifice of God is a broken spirit, a broken and contrite heart the Lord will not despise." And because He stands in need of nothing, he declares in the preceding Psalm—"I will take no bullock out of thine house, nor he goat out of thy fold, for all the beasts of the forest are mine, and so are the cattle upon a thousand hills. If I were hungry, I would not tell thee, for the world is Mine, and the fulness thereof. Thinkest thou that I will eat bull's flesh, or drink the blood of goats?"

'And lest it might be supposed that He rejected such things through anger, He proceeds to give this counsel—"Offer unto God the sacrifice of praise, and pay thy vows unto the Most High. Call upon Me in the day of trouble. I will deliver thee, and thou shalt glorify Me." He rejects those things by which sinners imagined they could propitiate God, showing that He Himself stands in need of nothing; but He exhorts and advises to those things whereby men may be justified and draw nigh to God. Isaiah makes a similar declaration. "To what purpose is the multitude of your sacrifices unto Me, saith the Lord?" He repudiated holocausts and sacrifices and oblations, as likewise the new moons, and the Sabbaths, and the festivals, and the rest of the services which

accompanied these. And then he exhorted them in what pertained to salvation. “Wash you, make you clean, put away the evil of your doings from before Mine eyes, cease to do evil, learn to do well, seek judgment, relieve the oppressed, judge the fatherless, plead for the widow; come, and let us reason together, saith the Lord.”

After many other passages to the same effect, he proceeds to give an account of the Christian spiritual sacrifice of the Holy Eucharist.

‘When Christ gave directions to His Disciples to offer unto God the first-fruits of His own created things—not as though He stood in need of them, but in order that they might be themselves neither unfruitful, nor ungrateful—He took the creature bread, and gave thanks and said, “This is My Body.” He took the chalice likewise, which is a part of that creation to which we belong: and He confessed it to be His Blood: and He taught the new Oblation of the new Covenant. This the Church, receiving from the Apostles, offers to God throughout all the world, presenting it to Him, Who gives us the first-fruits of His own gifts in the New Testament, as the means of our subsistence. It was concerning this that Malachi, one of the twelve Prophets, spake beforehand—“I have no pleasure in you, saith the Lord of hosts, neither will I accept an offering at your hand. For from the rising of the sun unto the going down of the same, My Name is glorified among the Gentiles, and in every place incense is offered unto My Name, and a pure offering; for great is My Name among the Gentiles, saith the Lord Almighty.” By these words He indicates in the plainest manner, that the Jews should indeed cease to make offerings to God; but that still, in every place, a pure sacrifice should be offered to Him, and His Name be glorified among the Gentiles.

‘ And what other name is there which is thus glorified among the Gentiles, save that of our Lord, by Whom the Father is glorified, and man likewise? He calls it His own Name because it is the Name of His own Son, Who by Him became man. Just as a king, if he himself paints a likeness of his son, is right in calling it his own, for these two reasons, both because it is the likeness of his son, and because it is his own work. Thus does the Father confess the Name of Jesus Christ, which throughout all the world is glorified in the Church, to be His own Name, both because it is the Name of His Son, and because He Who thus describes it, gave His Son for the salvation of men. Since therefore the Name of the Son belongs to the Father, and since in the Almighty God, the Church makes Oblations through Jesus Christ, upon both these grounds, God saith—“In every place incense is offered to My Name and a pure offering.” And John in the Apocalypse declares, that ‘the incense is the prayers of the Saints.’ ’

It would surely be difficult to picture in the imagination even, a lovelier olive-branch, upon the subject of the Sacrament of the Saviour’s love, than these words of the Saint, whose very name is an Eirenicon, present to us. On the one hand, it speaks to the Protestant of the absolute necessity, under the New Covenant, of a spiritual worship, that it is that alone which God requires, and which alone He will approve of and accept. And on the other hand, it appeals to the heart of every Catholic, by speaking of the Eucharist in language with which he is familiar, and in a spirit which shows him that Irenæus sought in that most blessed and most holy Ordinance, exactly what all true Christians have ever sought—the blessedness of perfect union with the Lord Whom they love.

CHAPTER X.

THE EBIONITES—THEIR CONNECTION WITH THE EARLY CHURCH OF JERUSALEM.

THERE are many important questions connected with the Ebionites, but the one which absorbs all others in interest is their relation to the Apostolic Church of Jerusalem.

It will be unnecessary to examine and discuss all the theories, ancient and modern, by which their name has been sought to be explained. The simplest theory is in this case at once the most natural and the most probable.

The Ebionites, that is, the Ebyonim, or the Poor. The early followers of Christ in Jerusalem were for the most part the lower orders of the people. ‘Have any of the rulers, or of the Pharisees believed on Him?’ ‘The common people heard him gladly.’ And though, after the Resurrection, more persons of station and influence cast in their lot with the despised infant sect, it is certain that for a few years at least, the name of ‘the Ebyonim’ would have been a sufficiently accurate description of the Christian community.

This tends in the direction of showing that the Ebionites were originally, and for a very few years, co-extensive with the Hebrew Christian Church of Jerusalem, perhaps even of Palestine. It is probable that as the disciples of Jesus were called Christians at Antioch, the same people were called, amongst other names, Ebionites in the former city. The name of Christian gradually commended itself

for its appropriateness and convenience as the best title to be bestowed universally upon those who believed in the crucified Jesus, whilst the other, and perhaps rival name sank gradually into disuse. Apparent accident seems to have always had a good deal to do with determining the fate of names. And we may take it for granted that if the repute of heresy had never been connected with the Ebionim, their name would finally, though not so speedily have become extinct.

It is most improbable that there ever was any real living person named Ebion, whose followers were from him named Ebionites.¹ A careful study of the history of these people seems to bring out with considerable clearness, that they claimed to be the original Church of Jesus Christ, in which they had always preserved, in their integrity and purity, true Apostolic doctrine and tradition. To have taken therefore the name of some comparatively obscure teacher, and called themselves after him, would have been like consciously abandoning their position and playing into their opponents' hands. But it was not so. Their own interpretation of their name seems to have been that they were, *par excellence*, 'The Poor : ' 'the poor,' of whom Jesus spake, when He said, 'Blessed be ye poor.' They were the same poor of whom the great Teacher used the words—'Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.' Thus the *Ebionim* would be used by themselves as a title of highest honour, but by their adversaries it would speedily become a name of reproach. They were those who thought poorly, or meanly concerning the dignity of Christ. Hence their

¹ St. Epiphanius, who ought to have known better, not only makes a person called Ebion to be the Founder of the Sect, but relates as happening to him the story which is told by others about St. John and Kerinthus and the Bath.

name, which might and would have been held in honour by their fellow-disciples in every place, came at length to be regarded with abhorrence as that of persons who did not believe the Saviour to be the Eternal Son of God, begotten before the worlds.

This brings us to the most important enquiry whether, or not, a profession of belief in the true and eternal Divinity of Christ was necessary for admission into the Apostolic Church of Jerusalem? All orthodox believers of the present day would wish to answer—yes. But such an answer facts will scarcely allow.

Candid investigators will find no difficulty in perceiving that from an early period of our Lord's earthly ministry, some at least of His more immediate followers must have been convinced that He was true and very God. This is not the place to enter into the proof of this. Abundant evidence may be found in other works. What now concerns us is, whether such belief was required from those who were willing to join in the Apostles' communion and fellowship.

Not only was this belief apparently not required, as of necessity : but if we will throw off all prejudgments and prepossessions, and read the opening chapters of the Acts of the Apostles, and especially St. Peter's speeches, as we would any other writings, we can come to no other conclusion.

We must carefully bear in mind what was St. Peter's object. It was to convince the Jews that Jesus Christ was the great appointed Teacher whom God had sent—the true spiritual Prince whom they were to obey. The Apostle felt that if they once acknowledged these great truths, every thing else would follow in due time and in natural order. Thus we find an explanation of the phenomenon, that whilst there is not one single word in

that early Apostolic teaching to which we refer, which is *inconsistent* with the doctrine of Christ's Divinity, neither is there anything which directly implies it, nor perhaps anything from which persons left to themselves, without further teaching, would infer it.

All this may of course be denied. I can only say that I have no interest in saying it. It is repugnant to my own feelings to say it. But I must not, and I will not shrink from saying whatever the truth of history seems to me to demand should be said. So entirely did St. Chrysostom recognise the abstinence, on the part of the Apostles, from at first proclaiming the Godhead of Christ, that in his Homilies upon the Acts, he apologizes for this abstinence, and endeavours to explain it.¹ But however we may account for it, the fact of the reticence is indisputable.

We may, perhaps, feel that if St. Peter had taught openly and unreservedly the two great Catholic doctrines of the Trinity and the Incarnation, the history of the Church of Jerusalem would have been very different from what it was. Instead of three thousand being converted by one sermon, five thousand by another; instead of Jerusalem being filled with Christian doctrine, and a great company of the priests being obedient to the Faith, that Faith would have been as comparatively unfruitful as it was in the days when Christ appeared in the Flesh. For some deep mysterious reason, it would seem as though it were Christ's will to repel all but a very few

¹ Καὶ πάντα μὲν οὖν ἄξια θαύματος τὰ ἐν τῷ βίβλῳ τούτῳ κείμενα, μάλιστα δὲ τῶν Ἀποστόλων ἡ συνεκατάβασις, ἣν καὶ τὸ Πνεῦμα αὐτοῖς ἐπέβαλλε, παρασκεύαζον αὐτοὺς τῷ τῆς οἰκονομίας ἐνδιατρίβειν λόγῳ. Διὰ δὲ τοῦτο τσαῦτα περὶ Χριστοῦ διαλεχθέντες, ὀλίγα μὲν περὶ θεότητος αὐτοῦ εἰρήκασι, τὰ δὲ πλείονα περὶ τῆς ἀνθρωπότητος διαλέγοντο. St. Chrysos. Hom. i. in Act. Apost.

from approaching Him before He was lifted up upon the Cross ; but after He had been lifted up He willed to draw all men unto Him. This may perhaps help a thoughtful mind to understand what, otherwise, would seem very difficult of explanation—How it is that so much higher and plainer a doctrine concerning the Divinity of Christ appears to be taught in the Gospels, than that which is put forward in the Acts of the Apostles ?

Let us take St. Peter's Sermon upon the Day of Pentecost as a crucial example. There is nothing which it contains, which would not in all probability have been acknowledged by every Ebionite Christian to be undoubted truth, down to the time when they finally disappear from history. Yet upon such a statement of doctrine, miserably insufficient as all orthodox churches would now call it, three thousand Jews and Proselytes were, without delay, admitted to the Sacrament of Baptism.

The development of the Ebionites from an integral portion of the original Hebrew, and therefore Christian Church of Jerusalem into a sect, may be traced to two chief causes.

1. They themselves did not continue to be contented with toleration, or with holding their own opinions about Christ, without formulating them into dogmatic statements.

2. The Gentile Churches, especially those which owed their conversion to St. Paul, passed through an analogous stage of the spiritual life. They too claimed to formulate dogmas. But the dogmas for which they contended were propositions the direct contradictories of Ebionite statements.

It is evident that there could be, sooner or later, but one result. Either the Church must become that Catholic Community which she ultimately became, but with the exclusion of the Ebionites, or else the Church as a whole

must become Ebionite, to the exclusion of the Catholic element.

We may perhaps regret that it should be so. But it was inevitable: and none who are wise will regret the inevitable.

When we place Ebionite development first, it is not meant that it came first in order of time. The development of the rival systems went on, in all probability, *pari passu*, chronologically speaking. At the same time it was not until the Church of the Circumcision removed to Pella, about A.D. 70, that the impossibility of two bodies of men holding contradictory opinions upon such a vital question as the Divinity of Christ, continuing to be members of the same church, would be fully perceived.

Free intercourse amongst all its branches and all its members is as the breath of life to the Catholic Church, as a corporate whole: just as isolation is, or would be, the surest means which could be employed for its extinction.

If, in the Providence of God, Jerusalem could have continued to be the great central heart of the Church, from whence the life-blood was continually passing and repassing to the remotest extremities, then might Ebionite tendencies have been gently and tenderly and gradually, but effectually counteracted, just as Judaizing tendencies had been already healthily checked by the Apostles and Elders and Brethren coming together in the First Council of Jerusalem. It was the isolation of the Hebrew Church at Pella which led to her ruin. The Gentile Church had gone her own way for more than two generations. And when the current of events once more brought the Mother and Daughter face to face, it was seen that unless the latter were willing to give up the birthright with which she believed the Lord of all had endowed her,

these two might no longer abide in the same communion and fellowship. If there be one thing that is more unwise than needless dogmatism, it is to ignore the power which dogma will ever possess, so long as the human mind and soul and intellect are constituted as they are.

Our knowledge of the Ebionite opinions and tendencies is derived from various sources. There are perhaps fewer irreconcilable discrepancies in the accounts given of them, than in the case of almost all the other early heresies.

The whole Ebionite body acknowledged that the true God was the Maker of the world, and the Author of the Law of Moses.¹ These were the chief points in which they diverged from the Kerinthians, a sect with which they had much in common. Their recognition of the Law of Moses we learn from Tertullian. And we may readily accept his statement. But when he goes on to say, that 'in order to vindicate the Law, they shut out the Gospel,' Tertullian must be understood as speaking rhetorically.

At Pella the Ebionites lived, according to Epiphanius, upon harmonious terms with another semi-Jewish, semi-Christian sect, the Nazarenes. This Father's account of them is very complete, and allowing for occasional carelessness, apparently trustworthy. The chief difficulty in writing their history arises from the multitudinous and occasionally mutually antagonistic forms which their various subdivisions assumed.² Epiphanius compares them to the fabulous Hydra, for each of whose heads, as oft as they were cut off, many more sprang up to replace

¹ Tertull. Præscrip. Hæret. Tertullian spells Ebion, Hebion. This may be the result of ignorance, or the H may represent the slight aspiration of the initial Hebrew *ח*.

² Πολύμορφον τεράστιον.

them. When he says that Ebion himself was a contemporary of the Apostles, it is probably only a careless way of stating that the origin of the sect goes back to Apostolic times. The whole, however, of the Ebionite subdivisions may be arranged under two chief heads. 1. Those who believed that Christ was the Son of Joseph and Mary according to the ordinary course of nature ; and, 2. Those who believed in His supernatural Birth of the Blessed Virgin.¹

A curious incidental proof of the very early origin of these people is their connection with the Jewish sect of the Daily Baptists. This was one of the seven sects which existed during the life of our Lord. Many of those who adhered to the singular usage of this sect would pass into the ranks of the Christian Church of Jerusalem. And may not the practice of a weekly Baptism in the Ethiopic Church, which has survived to the present day, be traced to the possibility of the converted Eunuch of Candace, Queen of Ethiopia, having been attached as a Jewish Proselyte to this sect?²

From what Epiphanius says, those Ebionites who were Daily Baptists do not seem to have rejected the one Baptism of Christ, received once for all, but to have considered their old Jewish practice to be not inconsistent, or incompatible with it.

The most prominent feature of Ebionism, as compared with other Sects, will be found to consist in its wonderful

¹ Theodoret : De hæretic. fabul. lib. ii.

² Ἐν ταῖς οὖν περιόδοις τὸ πᾶν εἰς ἑαυτοὺς μετήνεγκαν καταφενσάμενοι Πέτρον κατὰ πολλοὺς τρόπους ὡς αὐτοῦ καθ' ἡμέραν βαπτιζομένου ἁγνισμοῦ ἕνεκεν. Also, Βάπτισμα δὲ καὶ αὐτοὶ λαμβάνουσι χωρὶς ὧν καθ' ἡμέραν βαπτίζονται. St. Epiph. Adv. Hæres. Ebion. The practice of this sect of Daily Baptists may help to explain the suddenness of the Eunuch's question to Philip, 'See ! water, what doth hinder me to be baptized ?'

power of absorption and assimilation. Without apparently exercising any special influence upon others itself, it was influenced by every doctrinal system with which it came in contact. Without being like snow in its original purity, it resembled snow in receiving a tinge of colour from each extraneous body. Attention to this fact is the only thing which will help us to understand its multi-form character.

As well as we can gather from a very rhetorical passage of St. Irenæus, these people received the other great Christian Sacrament of the Eucharist.¹ But they made use of water only for the Chalice. This again points to a probable origin of the Sect of the Aquarii in Apostolic times. St. Irenæus seems to say that the reason of the rejection by the Ebionites of the mingled Chalice was to be sought in a prior rejection of St. Luke's account of the miraculous Conception of Christ—that 'the Holy Ghost came upon Mary, and the Power of the Highest overshadowed her, and therefore that that Holy Thing which was born of her was the Son of the Most High God, the Father of all.' But whilst we accept the statement of fact, it is not absolutely necessary to adopt Irenæus' explanation of it: for this reason, that the practice in question was probably common to each of the two great divisions of the Ebionites. And though the continual action and reaction, one upon another, of doc-

¹ 'Vani autem et Ebionæi unionem Dei et hominis per fidem non recipientes in suam animam, neque intelligere volentes quoniam Spiritus Sanctus advenit in Mariam, quapropter et quod generatum est sanctum est, et Filius Dei Altissimi Patris omnium. Reprobant itaque hi commixtionem vini cælestis, et sola aqua sæcularis volunt esse.' St. Iren. v. 1. Their use of water only in the Eucharist is clear from Epiphanius. *Μυστήρια ἐγῆθεν τελοῦσαι κατὰ μίμησιν τῶν ἁγίων ἐν τῇ ἐκκλησίᾳ ἀπὸ ἐνιαυτοῦ εἰς ἐνιαυτὸν διὰ ἁζύμων, καὶ τὸ ἄλλο μέρος τοῦ Μυστηρίου δι' ὕδατος μόνου.*

trine and practice should never be overlooked in the History of the Church, yet even so comparatively late as the time of St. Cyprian,¹ the usage of a Sacramental Cup of water, unmingled with wine, does not appear to have necessarily involved unorthodox doctrine.

The Ebionites in the earliest stage of their history, whilst Jerusalem was yet standing, took St. James the Less as their great hero and patron. Afterwards, in the second century, they installed St. Peter in the place of pre-eminence. This change of heroes implied and accompanied a corresponding change in doctrine. At first the Sect was influenced by the ascetic principles of the Essenes. Afterwards when the Essenes became, for the most part, absorbed into the monastic portion of the Catholic Church, the Ebionites went back to that Judaic spirit, which before the coming of Christ had exalted marriage above virginity.² In the time of Epiphanius,

¹ Some of St. Cyprian's words upon this subject are important for various reasons. 'Quando autem in calice vino aqua miscetur, Christo populus adunatur, et credentium plebs ei, in quem credidit, copulatur et conjungitur. Quæ copulatio et conjunctio aquæ et vini sic miscetur in calice Domini, ut commixtio illa non possit ab invicem separari. In sanctificando calice Domini offerri aqua sola non potest, quomodo nec vinum solum potest. Sic vero calix Domini non est aqua sola aut vinum solum, nisi utrumque sibi misceatur, quomodo nec corpus Domini potest esse farina sola aut aqua sola nisi utrumque adunatum fuerit et copulatum, et panis unius compage solidatum.'—Epist. 63.

It has been decided by the highest Appellate Court for ecclesiastical matters in the Anglican Church, that the unmingled Chalice of wine is the only legal sacramental Cup. This brings the English Establishment into direct conflict with the Catholic Church of the third century, as represented by the great Archbishop of Carthage. If his words have any truth, then the only *legal* Chalice in the English Church is not the Communion Cup of the Lord Jesus Christ: for the Eucharistic Offering cannot be made with wine alone. I need scarcely say that I give no opinion of my own, but state St. Cyprian's view.

² Τὰ νῦν δὲ ἀπηγόρευται παντάπασι παρ' αὐτοῖς παρθερία τε καὶ ἐγκράτεια ὡς καὶ παρὰ ταῖς ἄλλαις ὁμοίαις ταυτῇ αἰρέσεσι. Ποτὲ γάρ

virginity and abstinence from marriage were absolutely forbidden amongst them. This would seem to imply that the earliest Ebionites did for the most part confess that Christ was born of a Virgin, whilst the later Sect denied it. This chronological distinction is of considerable importance.

In connection with their later depression of virginity must probably be connected their exaltation of Adam, as something more than a type of Christ, a kind of real pre-appearance, or pre-embodiment of the Messiah. St. Epiphanius, still speaking apparently of Ebionites who were his contemporaries, says—‘Some of them maintain that Adam, the Adam who was first formed, and into whom God breathed the breath of life, was the Christ.’¹ This Christ they looked upon as pre-existing before the world, as coming into the world when he pleased, and as assuming a body to appear to Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, and the rest of the Patriarchs. Here are evidently glimpses of the truth. Knowing as we do their bitter hatred of St. Paul,² it is at least possible that they may have adopted their views about Adam being the Christ in a spirit of sheer opposition. Because the Apostle of the Gentiles taught, that ‘in Adam all died;’ that ‘the first man was of the

παρθενίαν ἐσεμνύνοντο, δῆθεν διὰ τὸν Ἰάκωβον τὸν ἀδελφὸν τοῦ Κυρίου, καὶ τὰ αὐτῶν συγγράμματα πρεσβυτέροις καὶ παρθένοις γράφουσι. St. Epiph. p. 126.

¹ Τινὲς γὰρ ἐξ αὐτῶν καὶ Ἀδὰμ τὸν Χριστὸν εἶναι λέγουσι, τὸν πρῶτον πλασθέντα τε καὶ ἐμφυσηθέντα ἀπὸ τῆς τοῦ Θεοῦ ἐπιπνοίας. "Ἄλλοι δὲ ἐν αὐτοῖς λέγουσιν ἄνωθεν μὲν ὄντα πρὸ πάντων δὲ κτισθέντα, πνεῦμα ὄντα καὶ ὑπὲρ ἀγγέλους ὄντα, πάντων δὲ κυριεύοντα, καὶ Χριστὸν λέγεσθαι, τὸν ἐκείσε δὲ αἰῶνα κεκληρῶσθαι ἔρχεσθαι δὲ ἐνταῦθα ὅτε βούλεται, ὡς καὶ ἐν τῷ Ἀδὰμ ἦλθε. St. Epiph. Hæres. xxx.

² Οὗτοι δὲ τοῦ μὲν Ἀποστόλου πᾶσας τὰς ἐπιστολάς ἀρνητέας ἡγοῦνται εἶναι δεῖν, ἀποστάτην ἀποκαλοῦντες τοῦ νόμου. Eus. H. E. iii. 27. Observe how Eusebius calls St. Paul, *the Apostle*, without naming him.

earth earthy,' in contradistinction to the 'Second Man who was the Lord from heaven,' the Ebionites would feel a special satisfaction in maintaining that there was no antithesis between the First and the Second Man—that Adam and Christ were one and the same. It is very difficult to trace all the strange opinions of the early heretics to their original sources, but if we could, we should find that there always was some historical, or metaphysical germ from which they took their rise.

Thus far we have dwelt upon nothing in Ebionism which cannot be traced to Jewish elements, those elements sometimes conflicting mutually, and thus producing what appear to us paradoxical lines of thought. Next however, we advance upon ground where Ebionism comes into contact with Gentile Gnosticism, and is evidently influenced by that Alexandrine School, which attempted to form a system of theology out of the reconciliation of Greek philosophy with the revelation from God contained in the Hebrew Scriptures. This is what Epiphanius seems to mean when he says, that 'those who followed Ebion altered his teaching, and forming an alliance with the Sampsonians and the Elkesaites thought, some one thing, some another, concerning Christ.' To this alliance must be attributed the idea that Christ was first created as an Archangel, and that He presided over the rest of the angelic host, and over the other works of God, as a kind of prince. And that the Supreme God created two chief Spirits, Christ and the Devil.¹

From the Old Testament they must have taken the idea

¹ Δύο δέ τινας, ὡς ἔφην συνιστῶσιν ἐκ Θεοῦ τεταγμένους, ἕνα μὲν τὸν Χριστὸν, ἕνα δὲ τὸν Διάβολον· καὶ τὸν μὲν Χριστὸν λέγουσι τοῦ μέλλοντος αἰῶνος εἰληφέναι τὸν κλῆρον, τὸν δὲ Διάβολον τοῦτον πεπιστεῦθαι τὸν αἰῶνα, ἐκ προσταγῆς δῆθεν τοῦ Παντοκράτορος κατ' αἵτησιν ἐκατέρων αὐτῶν. St. Epiphani. p. 140.

that Christ was to be the ruler of the world to come,¹ that is to say, the coming Æon or Dispensation; and from the New Testament they must have derived the notion that to Satan was committed the government of this present world.²

Then in addition to all this, some of them held the special Kerinthian Docetic theory that Jesus was distinct from Christ, that Jesus was a man, born like other men; but that he was made the Son of God by the electing will of the Father, and that his election was manifested by Christ's—who, as we have seen, had been created an Archangel—descending upon Jesus at His baptism in the form of a Dove. Then as this portion of the Sect professed to believe in the Crucifixion, the Resurrection and the Ascension of Christ,³ it could only be upon the Docetic supposition that Christ left Jesus to Himself, to suffer His Passion alone.

This explains why the Gospel according to the Hebrews, which the Ebionites in common with several other cognate sects received, lays so much stress upon the Baptism of Jesus in the river Jordan. That event was really the corner-stone of their whole system. Without entering here into how far the Gospels of the Hebrews, of the Nazarenes, and the Hebrew or Syro-Chaldaic form of St. Matthew were identical, or coextensive one with another, it is clear that they all assign great prominence to the Baptism of Jesus Christ.

¹ Isaiah ix. 6. The Child that was to be born, was to be called *πατήρ τοῦ μέλλοντος αἰῶνος*. But the LXX text here, as in so many of the Messianic prophecies, seems to be utterly uncertain, or corrupt.

² Satan is called the 'god of this world,' 2 Cor. iv. 4. The early Fathers appear to me to have had more difficulty in defending this expression as orthodox, against the Valentinians and other heretics, than they had with any other passage in either the Old, or New Testament.

³ St. Epiphan. p. 127.

Thus in the Gospel of the Nazarenes—‘It came to pass that when the Lord went up out of the water, the whole Fountain of the Holy Spirit descended and rested upon Him, and said unto Him, My Son, in all the Prophets I was waiting for Thee, that Thou shouldest come, and I might rest upon Thee. Thou art My rest. Thou art My First Begotten Son, Who reignest eternally.’¹ And again—‘Now hath My Mother, the Holy Ghost, borne me.’

These passages have been preserved by St. Jerome. Epiphanius gives several other particulars taken from the Gospel, which he says the Ebionites used, and which he calls a mutilated form of St. Matthew. But if mutilated, it was also interpolated, and largely so. This Hebraic Gospel thus related the Baptism of Christ.²

‘When the people were baptized, Jesus also came and was baptized by John. And as He went up out of the water, the heavens were opened, and He saw the Holy Spirit of God, in the form of a Dove, descending and entering into Him. And there came a voice from heaven—Thou art My Beloved Son; in Thee I am well-pleased: and again—To-day have I begotten Thee. And straight-

¹ ‘Factum est autem quum ascendisset Dominus de aqua, descendit omnis Fons Spiritus Sancti et requievit super Eum, et dixit Illi, Fili mi, in omnibus prophetis expectabam Te, ut venires, et requiescerem in Te. Tu es enim requies mea. Tu es Filius meus Primogenitus, Qui regnas in sempiternum.’ Gospel of the Nazarenes, cited by St. Jerome. Comment in Is. c. xi. lib. iv. Ed. Vallars. And again, ‘Modo Me tulit Mater Mea, Spiritus Sanctus.’ In Is. xl. 11.

² Τοῦ λαοῦ βαπτισθέντος ἦλθε καὶ Ἰησοῦς καὶ ἐβαπτίσθη ὑπὸ τοῦ Ἰωάννου. Καὶ ὡς ἀνῆλθεν ἀπὸ τοῦ ὕδατος, ἠιόγησαν οἱ οὐρανοί, καὶ εἶδε τὸ Πνεῦμα τοῦ Θεοῦ τὸ ἅγιον ἐν εἰδῇ περιστερᾶς κατελθούσης καὶ εἰσελθούσης εἰς αὐτόν. Καὶ φωνὴ ἐγένετο ἐκ τοῦ οὐρανοῦ, λέγουσα· σὺ μου εἶ ὁ υἱὸς ὁ ἀγαπητός, ἐν σοὶ εὐδόκησα. Καὶ πάλιν· ἐγὼ σήμερον γεγέννηκά σε. Καὶ εὐθὺς περιέλαμψε τὸν τόπον φῶς μέγα. Ὅτι ἰδὼν, φησιν ὁ Ἰωάννης λέγει αὐτῷ· σὺ τίς εἶ Κύριε; St. Epiph. p. 138.

way a great light shone round about the place. And when John saw Him, he saith unto Him, who art Thou, Lord? And again there came a voice from heaven unto Him—This is My Beloved Son, in whom I am well-pleased. And then John fell down at His feet, and said—I beseech Thee, O Lord, that Thou wouldest baptize me. But Jesus forbade him, saying—Suffer it; for thus it behoveth that all things be fulfilled.’

It must, one would think, be impossible to compare this account of Christ’s Baptism in this Hebraic Gospel with the Gentile Gospel of St. Luke, without seeing how much the latter owed to the earlier written account—especially the circumstance that the Holy Ghost came down upon our Lord in a bodily shape, like a Dove. This comparison brings out, in a remarkable manner, an exercise of the critical faculty on the part of St. Luke. Whilst accepting the statement of the descent of the Holy Spirit in the form of a Dove, he rejects, or at least he declines to accept the further statement, that the Holy Spirit entered into Jesus. The reason for this non-acceptance is to be sought for in the fact, that though the expression is not necessarily unorthodox, it was capable of being understood in a heretical sense. Indeed it is quite possible that when St. Luke wrote, it had been already misinterpreted. All this tends to show how very real, and at the same time how very natural, was the compilation of the New Testament Scriptures.

With this Ebionite view of the special consecration of Jesus in the waters of Jordan must probably be connected the account which St. Hippolytus gives of some of their opinions. They held not only that men generally were justified by the works of the Law, but that Jesus Himself was justified by His fulfilment of the Law. For this reason also, He was called the Christ of God, and

Jesus, because no other man had perfectly kept the Law. If any one else had done all things enjoined by the Law, he would have been the Christ. So in like manner, if they themselves were to keep the whole Law, they too would be Christs.¹

As far as it is possible to arrange in anything like chronological order the chief doctrinal mutations of this, the most Protean of all the early Sects, they would seem to have been somewhat as follows :—

1. Until the flight of the Christian Jews to Pella, they formed an integral portion of the Church of Jerusalem, holding as individuals many strange and peculiar opinions, but in solution as it were. There was no crystallisation into dogma. There was no precipitation into a sect.

2. At Pella, after the destruction of Jerusalem by Titus, and the forced discontinuance of the Temple worship, they seem to have come under the influence of the spiritualizing and allegorizing Jewish School of Alexandria. To the period therefore from about A.D. 70 to A.D. 110, must be assigned the semi-Gnostic phase of Ebionism ; and its adoption of the heathenish mysteries of Elxai.² And unless we placed it as occurring during this

¹ Ἐθεσιν Ἰουδαίκοις ζῶσι, κατὰ νόμον φάσκοντες δικαιοῦσθαι, καὶ τὸν Ἰησοῦν λέγοντες δεδικαιῶσθαι ποιήσαντα τὸν νόμον· διὸ καὶ Χριστὸν αὐτὸν τοῦ Θεοῦ ὠνομάσθαι, καὶ Ἰησοῦν, ἐπεὶ μηδεὶς τῶν ἑτέρων ἐτέλεσε τὸν νόμον· εἰ γὰρ καὶ ἑτέρος τις πεποιήκει τὰ ἐν νόμῳ προσταγμένα, ἦν ἂν ἐκεῖνος ὁ Χριστός. Δύνασθαι δὲ καὶ ἑαυτοὺς ὁμοίως ποιήσαντας Χριστοὺς γενέσθαι· καὶ γὰρ καὶ αὐτὸν ὁμοίως ἄνθρωπον εἶναι πᾶσι λέγουσιν. St. Hippol. Ref. omn. Hæres. lib. vii. c. 34.

² Πόσα δὲ ἄλλα δεῖνὰ καὶ μοχθηρίας γέγοντα παρ' αὐτοῖς ἐπιτηδεύεται ; ὅταν γάρ τις ἐξ αὐτῶν ἢ νόσφ' περιπέσοι ἢ ὑπὸ ἔρπετοῦ δηχθείη κάτεισιν εἰς τὰ ὕδατα καὶ ἐπικαλεῖται τὰς ἐπωνυμίας τὰς ἐν τῷ Ἰηλξαῖ, τοῦ τε οὐρανοῦ καὶ τῆς γῆς τοῦ τε ἀλὸς καὶ τοῦ ὕδατος, τῶν τε ἀνέμων καὶ ἀγγέλων τῆς δικαιοσύνης, φασὶ, καὶ τοῦ ἄρτου καὶ ἐλαίου. Καὶ ἄρχεται λέγειν, βοηθῆτέ μοι, καὶ ἀπαλλάξατε ἀπ' ἐμοῦ τὸ ἄλγος. St. Epiphani. p. 141.

period of forty years, it would be impossible to receive as true the statement of Epiphanius, which he, as usual, muddles up in chaotic disorder with other traditions, that the Christ whom the Ebionites received, came to abolish sacrifices ; and that He told them, that unless they left off to offer sacrifices, the wrath of God would never cease from them.¹

3. About the year 110, and thence onwards to the second destruction of Jerusalem under Adrian, there was a great revival of the Judaic spirit all over the Roman Empire, and even beyond its boundaries. This revival produced, as was natural, a strong reaction amongst the half-christianised members of the same race.² Then it was that the Ebionites went back to their earlier traditions of strict Sabbatical observance, of the absolute necessity of circumcision for all who hoped to be saved—in fact to that very Judaizing spirit, against which St. Paul had made it one of the chief objects of his ministry to contend with the whole force of his learning and intellect.³

After the second crushing of all their hopes by the terrible chastisement which befell the Jews consequent upon the suppression of the revolt of Barchochebas, the more decided Ebionites maintained a separate existence in

¹ These were given as the very words of Christ Himself in the Ebionite Gospel. 'Ὡς τὸ παρ' αὐτοῖς εὐαγγέλιον καλούμενον περιέχει, ὅτι ἦλθον καταλῦσαι τὰς θυσίας, καὶ ἔαν μὴ παύσησθε τοῦ θύειν οὐ παύσεται ἅψ' ὑμῶν ἡ ὀργή. St. Epiphanius. p. 140.

² Eusebius, I believe, is the only writer who seems to have been aware of the effect of this reaction upon the Ebionites. *Τῇ τῶν προτέρων περιετρέποντο δυσσεβείᾳ, μάλιστα ὅτε καὶ τὴν σωματικὴν περὶ τὸν νόμον λατρείαν ὁμοίως ἐκείνοις περιέπειν ἐσπούδαζον.* H. E. iii. 27. The statement of St. Irenæus that they worshipped Jerusalem has probably no other foundation than that they prayed, as Daniel did, with their faces turned towards the Holy City.

³ In the Dialogue between Justin Martyr and Trypho will be found almost *passim*, most interesting evidence of this Judaic revival.

Palestine and the adjoining countries for about two more centuries. After that they become undistinguishable from the general mass of Judaism, and were gradually mingled with it.

Those who wish to learn some very curious particulars about this people, and a remarkable episode which happened in connection with them in the Fourth Century, must refer to the accounts given by Epiphanius. They scarcely fall within the scope of general history.

We have thus traced Ebionism through most of its devious windings, and tortuous wanderings. It is very touching and very wonderful to examine these fossilized organisms of thought so many ages after they have ceased to have a living existence: and to feel that they once stirred the hearts of multitudes, affected practice, and were not without their influence upon the history and the fate of nations.

And the relations which have been preserved respecting them in those ponderous folios of the Christian Fathers of which every one speaks, but few indeed read, must surely have some lesson for the Church of to-day, and of all time.

The special lesson which the history of the Ebionites seems to teach, is, that the Catholic Church must have some well-defined system of doctrine and practice; although it is certainly her duty and her privilege both, to make that system as simple, and as little burdensome as she can. But unless she would be content to be like Ebionism, as changeful in her outward form as the shadows of an evening cloud, as those baseless aerial fabrics which we see piled up on a summer's eve, she must give some real, tangible answer to the questions which the human mind will ask—‘What think ye of God?’ ‘What think ye of Christ?’ If she did not, she would not be that

City which hath foundations, firmly fixed, not on earth, but in the land of realities, rooted and established in that region of eternal verities, where God and Christ and the Angels are abiding as surely as we for a time are abiding here in the land of shadows. The mistake which all parties in the Post-Nicene Church seem to have made has been in deeming it necessary to frame some counter-statement of orthodoxy, in order to meet every varying phase of heresy; and in addition to denying the heresy, which was right, to insist upon a universal reception of the contrary affirmative proposition, which was sometimes wrong. And when every thing was accompanied by anathema, it is difficult to recognise the gentle spirit of the Gospel of Christ, and its earliest disciples.

What I have written, and the history of the Ebionites generally, is a sufficient vindication of the contemporary Church from the sneer of Gibbon, to the effect that Ebionism at the first tolerated *her*; but that she in the days of her strength would not tolerate *it*. Gibbon, here as ever, is true to the bare, dry fact; but as almost always when he treats of the Catholic Church, he misses entirely what is the very spirit and soul of history. Ebionism was a system as fluctuating as the waves of the sea, as changeable as its currents. It afforded no positive intellectual standing ground—no real basis on which to erect the edifice of faith in the unseen. And, as to do this, to give, as we have said, some definite answer to the question—‘What think ye of Christ?’ is the very mission of the Catholic Church in the world, it was needful that Ebionism and she should part asunder the one from the other, and each speed upon their appointed way, and accomplish their predestined end.

CHAPTER XI.

SAINT IGNATIUS, PATRIARCH OF ANTIOCH—HIS MARTYRDOM—
HIS WRITINGS VIEWED IN CONNECTION WITH EPISCOPACY.

FROM the history of the Mother Church of Jerusalem, we turn by a natural sequence to the great Daughter Church of Antioch.

As the Second Century of the Christian æra opens to our view, the most prominent figure in the Church of Syria, and indeed of the whole of Asia, east of Mount Taurus is this great Saint and primitive Martyr.

After relating his history, we shall be able to examine more fully and advantageously the very important subject of his literary remains.

A tradition has been preserved from early times in the Syrian Church, that Ignatius was the little child, whom our Blessed Lord took up in His arms, and commended to His Disciples as an example of meekness and humility. The chief ground for this tradition appears to be the surname Theophorus, by which Ignatius has been known to succeeding ages. The tradition is only mentioned here, because the lesson then taught by Christ illustrates very forcibly the character of this distinguished martyr—a character which all the unhappy wrangling of partisans over a few supposed sayings of his disjoined from their context, cannot deprive of its distinguishing graces of childlike meekness and humility, at least in the eyes of those who are willing to look a little deeper than the mere outward surface of things.

The place and date of his birth are alike unknown; but his writings give the attentive student some grounds for thinking that he had been intimately acquainted with several of the Apostles, and that he was far more familiar with Apostolic oral teaching and preaching, than acquainted with Apostolic, or quasi-Apostolic writings.

All ancient history testifies to the fact that he was a pupil and disciple of St. John the Divine; and from him he may not improbably have learnt those lessons of patient love and courageous faith and endurance, mingled with a certain sternness towards opponents, which shine out in his Epistles, and illustrate his martyrdom.

St. Ignatius was one of those men who always leave their mark either upon the age in which they live, or else upon the social, political, or religious systems with which they are more immediately connected. This last form of influence was that of St. Ignatius. Few probably who will study his history carefully and impartially, will dissent from the conclusion that he left the institution of Episcopacy in a somewhat different condition from that in which he found it; and that he paved the way, doubtless all unconsciously to himself, for far greater changes than any which he actually introduced.

There does not seem to be any special reason for questioning the alleged facts, that he was nominated by the Apostles to the Presidency of the important Church of Antioch, somewhere about A.D. 65, and that he continued in that office for the space of forty years. There are serious chronological difficulties connected with the date of his first appointment to his bishopric, and the Apostle by whom he was appointed, but these difficulties will either vanish entirely, or else become of trifling importance, as soon as we have learned to recognise the real nature of

Apostolic and Primitive Episcopacy. When once we have learned the plain and simple truth, that the essence as it were of the Episcopate is a distinction of '*office*'—to use the very word employed by St. Paul himself,¹ not of *order*, we shall discern our way, as though by means of a pillar of light, moving through the dimness and obscurity of those distant ages.

The early prominence of the Christian community of Antioch, like that of the sister Church of Alexandria, but unlike the early Roman Church, was due, in no trifling degree, to the vast number of Jews by whom the city was partly colonised. There can scarcely be a doubt that there was in very early times a Christian School of Antioch, much inferior indeed to that of Alexandria in learning, and in its influence upon the fortunes of the whole Catholic Church, but still very far from being insignificant in itself. And to obtain any clear insight into the teaching of this Antiochene School, the action of the Jewish element within it, and upon it, ought to be allowed full weight. It is certainly not by any means impossible that modern criticism which has passed through so many perplexing phases of change in its efforts to assign to their true source the so-called Clementines, and several other more or less kindred writings, all bearing traces of Judaic influence, will finally come to the conclusion that they may be most safely attributed to this Antiochene School.

It was not only that the name of Christians was first given to the disciples of the Lord Jesus at Antioch; but a comparison of the Greek shows what does not appear in the English Version, that it was given during the year

¹ The English version by translating ἐπισκοπή in 1 Tim. iii. 1, 'the office of a bishop,' seems to have caught with the nicest shade of accuracy, the exact meaning of the original.

which Paul and Barnabas spent together in that capital.¹ This origin of the name Christian will be found to be perfectly analogous with the rise of the names of many of those Jewish sects, such as the Dositheans, which were very numerous throughout Syria about the beginning of the Christian *Æra*.²

This is a slight, but still not altogether unimportant note of evidence of the influence of Judaism upon the early Christian school of Antioch. Indeed the attentive student will perhaps come to the conclusion that the first hundred or more years of Christianity at Antioch was marked by a tremendous struggle for supremacy between the Jewish and Gentile elements of which it was composed, in about equal proportions. And the undoubted fact that there were two bishops presiding contemporaneously at Antioch as in many other important cities in early times, taken in connection with a conjecture which has been hazarded, that one of these bishops presided over the Jewish, the other over the Gentile Christians, may possibly be a traditionary evidence of this struggle. The fall of Jerusalem in A.D. 70 would give the final preponderance to the Gentile element ; and from thenceforth this latter would assume more and more the exclusive title and prerogatives of the Catholic Church, whilst the depressed Jewish remnant would, partly from the force of circumstances, partly by choice, take up more and more the position of a distinct, and in some respects narrow Christian Sect. It is to this period that I feel disposed to assign some writings, which are invaluable to us, simply because they

¹ Acts xi. 26. *Χρηματίσαι τε πρῶτον, κ.τ.λ.* The *χρηματίσαι* depends upon *ἐγένετο*, as much as the previous clause of the sentence does.

² See Eus. H. E. iv. 22. *Κλεόβιος ὄθεν Κληροβιηνοί, καὶ Δοσίθεος, ὄθεν Δοσιθεανοί, κ.τ.λ.*

are undoubtedly Christian, and of venerable antiquity, but are yet widely divergent from the accepted orthodoxy of the rest of the Christian Church—I mean the so-called Clementines.

Looking at St. Ignatius' episcopate as a whole, we shall see that its general result was to keep the traditions and doctrines and practices of his Church of Antioch up to the level of the rest of the Catholic Church of his own day, neither rising much above, nor yet sinking below the standard of orthodoxy maintained by other Churches, and looking for aid and countenance especially to the famous and important Churches of Rome and Asia Minor.

But it is time that we gave some account of his life and martyrdom.

Ignatius, according to Eusebius, was appointed Bishop of Antioch at the death of Euodius. But we, who possess a key which Eusebius had not, can see that this was merely a way of accounting for the, to them, most perplexing fact, but one which was perfectly well known, that Euodius and Ignatius were both bishops at the same time.¹

Almost the only tradition which has been preserved of St. Ignatius' episcopate seems to be, that under him was commenced among the Christians of Antioch the system of antiphonal chanting, in imitation perhaps of what St. John heard in heaven, which he recorded in the Book of Revelation. Each of the great Churches exercised an influence upon the rest of the Catholic Church in some one particular direction; and the influence of the Church of Antioch seems to have been exerted more especially in the domain of music.

At length the time to which Ignatius had doubtless

¹ Eus. H. E. iii. 23, compared especially with the Apostolical Constitutions, vii. 46, 1.

looked forward for many years was nigh at hand. Trajan now sat upon the imperial throne, succeeding Nerva, who had restored the Christians from exile, and granted them ample toleration. During this brief season of tranquillity, the last of the Apostles had fallen asleep at Ephesus, and Ignatius must have been one of the very few remaining links which visibly connected the Church with her Saviour's presence on earth.

Exceptional circumstances rendered Trajan's reign, so auspicious for the general interests of the Roman world, by no means a happy or peaceful æra for that world within a world, the Christian Church. There were even certain natural elements of excellence in this prince's character, such as his love of justice, and his determination to maintain unimpaired the integrity of the empire, with its ancient institutions and laws, which made him treat the Christians with greater severity than many a much worse prince would have done.

These considerations may help us to understand, what otherwise would be extremely difficult to explain, that so many illustrious martyrs did undoubtedly suffer under Trajan, and that during almost the whole of his reign, although there is no proof of what is called a general persecution, Christians endured great afflictions, sometimes in one country or district, sometimes in another.

It is to this partial character of the persecution under Trajan that we may attribute the long calm which was enjoyed by the Church of Antioch—a calm which lasted certainly until A.D. 106, perhaps until 114, that is, if we can accept A.D. 115 as, upon the whole, the most probable date of St. Ignatius' martyrdom. Scholars seem very evenly divided both in numbers and in the weight of their arguments between the two. After careful consideration, I find myself unable to come to a decision upon

the ordinary grounds ; I am therefore inclined to support the latter date, for a reason which appears to me of much importance. It is this : that looking at the probabilities for the two dates assigned to the death of Ignatius as evenly balanced, then the later we place it, the more easily and naturally shall we be able to account for certain expressions in his Epistles to which critics take exception ; and consequently the less need will there be for the supposition of either forgery or interpolation to account for them. And it must surely be always pleasanter, where we can do so conscientiously, to get rid of the suspicion of forgery as attaching to the monuments of Christian antiquity. As time goes on we shall find only too many and indubitable proofs of the falsification of history, not to be glad to shrink from the imputation of it, except where we are absolutely obliged.

At length the storm burst, when Trajan undertook his expedition against the Parthians, and passed through Antioch. The aged Bishop Ignatius, as the most prominent Christian, was brought before the Emperor,¹ and the following conversation is related to have taken place. ‘Who art thou, evil spirit, who darest to transgress my commands, and even teachest others to transgress, so as to bring them to destruction?’ Ignatius answered—‘No one calls Theophorus a wicked spirit, for the demons have departed from the servants of God. But if you mean that I am troublesome to them, and if you call me evil, as against the demons, I confess to that charge : for I serve Christ the heavenly King, and so I overcome their

¹ His Acts, as given by Ruinart, say that he was taken before Trajan by his own request : and it seems to be implied that he hoped by this sacrifice of himself to save his flock. Whether the sacrifice had this effect is not quite certain, but it is very probable ; and would be quite in accordance with Trajan’s noble nature.

assaults.' Trajan said—'And who is Theophorus?' Ignatius answered—'He who has Christ in his breast.' Trajan asked—'Do not we then seem to have the gods in our mind, who fight for us against our enemies?' Ignatius answered—'You are in error when you call the demons of the nations, gods. There is but one God, Who made heaven and earth and the sea, and all things which in them are, and one Christ Jesus, the Only Begotten Son of God, Whose Kingdom may I enjoy!' 'Are you speaking of Him,' replied Trajan, 'Who was crucified under Pontius Pilate?' And then came the answer, ringing, we can well believe, clear and full, through the Judgment Hall—'Yes! Him Who crucified my sin, with the inventor of it; and Who put down all the deceit and malice of the demons under the feet of those who carry Him in their hearts.' Once more Trajan asked—'Dost thou then bear within thee Him that was crucified?' 'Yea,' said Ignatius, 'for it is written, "I will dwell in them and walk in them."' Trajan then pronounced the following sentence. 'We command that Ignatius, who affirms that he bears about within him Him that was crucified, be taken by soldiers a prisoner to great Rome, to become food for wild beasts, for the pleasure of the populace.' Then Ignatius lifting up his eyes to heaven cried out with joy—'I thank Thee, O Lord, because Thou hast vouchsafed to honour me with perfect love towards Thee, binding me with like iron chains to those of Thine Apostle Paul.' Afterwards he embraced his chains with joy, and prayed for the Church, commending it to the Lord with tears. 'Thus,' say his Acts, 'he became like an illustrious ram, which goes before his flock: and he was seized by the cruel soldiers, to be carried to Rome, as food for the wild beasts.'

The soldiers appear to have been ordered to convey

him by the most circuitous route to the distant capital. Some members of his flock started off immediately to get to Rome first, so as to be able to greet him upon his arrival. The bishop himself was accompanied by three of his most intimate friends, Philo, a deacon, Reno and Agathopodus, who are supposed to have written the Acts of his Martyrdom. From Antioch he was first taken to Seleucia, a seaport about sixteen miles distant. Here he was placed on board a vessel bound for Smyrna, whither he arrived after much bodily suffering.

The rest of the history of the Saint may be given in a translation of the Acts of his Martyrdom, which, with the exception of a few possible interpolations, appear either to have been written by eyewitnesses immediately after his death, or at least cannot well be later than the middle of the second century. And that, if we take A.D. 115 as the date of St. Ignatius' death, brings us within about a generation of the event itself.

‘When we came to the city of the Smyrnæans, with great joy he descended from the ship, and hastened to visit the holy Polycarp, the Bishop of Smyrna, his fellow disciple—for they had both been disciples in old time of the holy Apostle John. With him he abode, and communicated to him spiritual gifts.¹ He gloried also in his chains, and entreated him to strive together with him that he might continue steadfast in his purpose. And indeed he besought the whole Church—for the cities and

¹ Παρ' ᾧ καταχθεὶς, καὶ πνευματικῶν αὐτῷ κοινωνήσας χαρισμάτων. I have translated according to received ideas: and according to those claims of full apostolic powers, which it is evident Ignatius believed himself to possess. Cf. Rom. i. 11. ‘Ἐπιποθῶ γὰρ ἰδεῖν ὑμᾶς, ἵνα τι μεταδῶ χάρισμα ὑμῖν πνευματικόν.’ The words relating to Ignatius might, however, possibly bear another meaning—that Polycarp and himself had both received *χαρίσματα* from St. John.

churches of Asia, by their representatives, the bishops, priests and deacons, had hastened to Smyrna to greet him, if haply they might receive some portion of his spiritual grace—but especially, as we said, the holy Polycarp, that by the ministry of the wild beasts he might speedily become absent from the world, to be present with Christ.’

‘Thus he spake, and thus he testified, extending his love to Christ in such a manner as being about to lay hold of heaven through the good confession, and through the zeal of those who strove together with him in prayers for his victory. And he longed to bestow the requital of some reward upon the churches which had met him in the persons of their rulers ; and so he addressed to them letters of thanksgiving which distilled the spiritual dew of prayer and exhortation.’

From Smyrna he wrote an Epistle to the Roman Christians, to dissuade them from offering any opposition to his martyrdom, either through their obtaining a prolongation of his life by means of their prayers to God, or through their influence by means of presents, or otherwise, with the higher Roman magistrates. This allusion to the influence of the Christians at Rome is an evidence to show how very different was the Persecution under Trajan from that of several other persecutions. It also presents the character of Trajan himself in a very satisfactory light. This Letter to the Romans is inserted entire in the Acts as given by Ruinart, and it is the only one thus distinguished.

‘He now left Smyrna, being pressed forward by the soldiers, who were afraid he might not reach Rome before the conclusion of the Games.’ In several places he traversed almost exactly the route followed by St. Paul in one of his journeys. From Smyrna he went to

Troas: from Troas to Neapolis. From Neapolis, he passed through Macedonia, taking Philippi on his way, and on through Epirus to Epidamnus, on the eastern side of the Adriatic. From Epidamnus he appears to have crossed over in a merchant ship to the opposite coast of Italy, but instead of proceeding from thence by land to Rome, he must have sailed southward, and passing through the straits of Regium, have coasted along the south-western shore of Italy as far as Puteoli. 'At Puteoli,' continue his Acts, 'the holy man wished to land, being anxious to tread in the footsteps of the Apostle Paul. But a violent wind blowing direct from the south, would not permit of it. He blessed therefore the love of the brethren¹ at Puteoli, and continued his voyage. Being thus aided by a favourable wind, we finished our voyage in one more day and night, we indeed unwillingly, for we wept sore at the approaching departure of the just man from us. But to him it fell out according to his wish, who was eager to depart quickly out of the world, so that he might make haste to the Lord Whom he loved. We came to land at the Port of Rome, just as the unholy show was about to conclude. From Portus we went at once towards the city. And now the news was spread abroad concerning the holy martyr. The brethren who came to meet him were filled at once with fear and joy—with joy that they were counted worthy to hold intercourse with Theophorus, with fear, lest such an one as he was should be brought to die. And to some

¹ It is well worthy the attention of the thoughtful reader of these Acts, how completely St. Ignatius seems to have got out of a hierarchical atmosphere as soon as he left Asia Minor. Everything tends to show how very simple the organisation of the ministry of the Roman and Italian Churches still remained, even some considerable time after Episcopacy was beginning to take firm hold elsewhere.

who kept themselves close, and were full of zeal, and said that they would influence the people not to seek for the destruction of the righteous man, he, knowing all this in his spirit,¹ caused his arrival to be announced: and when he had saluted them all, he entreated their true love, and said more by word of mouth than he had written in his Epistle, and persuaded them not to thwart his hastening to the Lord. Thus all the Brethren knelt down, and he prayed to the Son of God on behalf of the churches: he prayed for the persecution that it might cease: he prayed for the mutual love of the Brethren one toward another. And then he went in haste to the Amphitheatre. Immediately upon his arrival thither, he was taken within, according to the original decree of Cæsar. This was at the very end of the show. It was a high Festival, and there was a great concourse of people, the day being called, according to the Roman reckoning, the thirteenth before the Kalends of January. Thus he was thrown to the fierce wild beasts, near the temple, that by their means the desire of the holy martyr Ignatius might be accomplished, according to that which is written—‘the desire of a righteous man is acceptable.’ Thus was his wish consummated: and as he had hoped that the collection of his remains might be a source of trouble to no one, so it fell out. Nothing was left of his sacred relics except the larger bones, which were wrapped in linen, and carried to Antioch as a priceless treasure left to the holy Church, because of the grace which was in the Martyr.’²

¹ The writers of these Acts unquestionably believed in the possession by St. Ignatius of supernatural powers. It is not necessary for us to do so. And we need not deny the authenticity of the Acts because we suppose the Authors to have been mistaken upon such a point.

² The Greek adds ‘*Καθὼς φθάσας ἐν τῇ ἐπιστολῇ τὴν ἰδίαν ἐπεθύμει γενέσθαι τελείωσιν.*’ These words alone would suggest some tampering with the Ignatian Epistles in very early times.

Who is there, who is not able to picture to himself the scene in the wondrous Amphitheatre of Rome, which is here so simply and naturally described? The ascetic form of the Syrian Patriarch, in his long, flowing, dark robe: his arms outstretched in the form of a cross, the central object of the arena, on whom the eyes of a hundred thousand spectators are intently fixed: the varied cries of this huge multitude, the wistful glances, and the whispers of the Christians who had liberally bribed the guards that they might be with him, and as near to him as they could, to the last—then the awful silence which fell upon all as the lion was seen preparing for the fatal spring: a rush through the air as rapid as a flash of light, as with one bound the fierce beast fell upon his prey, and the soul of the martyr was present with his Saviour and his God. And a few bones, and a bloody stain in the yellow sand, were all the tokens that he had ever lived on earth.

Then follows a singular narrative, which has led several modern critics to reject these Acts altogether. Possibly they might have looked upon them with a more favourable eye, as regards their genuineness, if only they could bring themselves to see what, after all, is a simple fact, that the Primitive Christians were what would now be called very superstitious. In acknowledging the authenticity of the accounts of many things which they said and did, it should be always borne in mind, that we do not necessarily pledge ourselves to the belief that such and such words were spoken, and such and such acts performed, but to what is much less, that they and their contemporaries did themselves honestly believe in the occurrence of such and such marvellous events.

The following are the words of the Acts—‘These things were done on the thirteenth day before the Kalends of January, that is the twentieth of December, Sura and

Sedecius being Consuls for the second time. After we had with tears been eyewitnesses of these things, we made many prayers to the Lord with kneeling and supplication, that He would give us, His weak ones, full assurance concerning the things which had happened. After that we fell asleep for a little space, when some of us suddenly beheld him¹ standing over us and embracing us; others again saw the blessed Ignatius praying for us, whilst others saw him bathed in sweat, as though he had come out of great toil and pain, and standing by the Lord. Then we rejoiced with great joy at what we had seen, and comparing together the visions of our dreams, we sang hymns to God, the giver of good things; and blessing the holy one, we made known to you the day; so that assembling together, we may have fellowship with the athlete, and noble martyr of Christ, who trampled upon the devil, and accomplished the course of his Christ-loving desire, in the same Christ Jesus our Lord, by Whom and with Whom, glory and might be to the Father with the Holy Ghost for ever. Amen.'

Now to what does all this really amount? Simply that these early Christians relate in the most artless manner, that they had seen their much loved bishop thrown to the lions in the Amphitheatre at Rome, that in a few minutes all was over—but a few of his larger bones remaining in the arena—that they carefully collected them and wrapped them in linen, that they went home and passed most of the night in prayer. At length wearied with the terrible excitement and exertions of the previous day, they all fell asleep, and saw the martyr in their

¹ As some collateral evidence of genuineness, observe how the narrators apply '*him*,' without an antecedent to St. Ignatius, just as St. Mary Magdalen said, 'Sir, if thou have borne *him* hence, tell me where thou hast laid him, and I will take him away.' St. John xx. 15.

dreams, and that he appeared to each in the aspect, and under the conditions in which he had, in all probability, been present to their waking thoughts. If ever there was a natural and candid narration, surely it is this—bearing truth stamped upon its very surface. It is exactly such an account as might be given by any simple honest folk of the present day; and until critics are able to show that it is unnatural for persons to dream after exciting events, they will try in vain to overthrow the credit of St. Ignatius' martyrdom.

The authenticity of St. Ignatius' Epistles has been debated for so long, and with such vast learning and ability on both sides of the question, that it would be next to impossible to bring anything fresh to bear upon its determination.

Few probably would care to controvert the position that if it had not been for the strong things which Ignatius has said, or has been supposed to say about Episcopacy, this controversy would never have assumed the proportions which it has done. And if it had not been for these sayings, or rather for what has been too hastily supposed to be their meaning, although the genuineness of the Epistles might have been disputed by a few, it is probable that they would have met with as general acceptance and recognition as, say the First Epistle of St. Clement of Rome.

Feeling then the uselessness of adding to the number of those who have taken part in this literary conflict, I shall be glad to pursue another course, which is to examine every passage in which this Father and Martyr of the Primitive Church speaks of the Christian Ministry, and endeavour to ascertain what, taken as a whole, is their real meaning. And in thus assuming the authorship of St. Ignatius, it is not because I attach any weight to

reasoning grounded upon the improbability of forgery. Unfortunately, the more we examine the records of the early Church, the more undeniably is the evidence of forgery and falsification pressed home upon us.

Historians have long been familiar with the literary forgeries which have been undertaken in the interests of the Papacy, or rather of Roman Supremacy; but a collateral depravation of historical records in the interests of Episcopacy has been almost, if not entirely overlooked. And yet the evidence of it is at once clear and ample. It runs in what we may designate a parallel groove with the tampering with antiquity in the interest of the Roman Pontiffs. Whilst this latter has, for the most part, assumed the shape of *forgery* of what had no real existence, such as the Letters and Decretals of early Popes, the former has taken the more unjustifiable course of falsification of what did exist. This is worse than the other for this reason, that it is possible sometimes to assign to an innocent motive the fabrication of supposititious works, but to falsify what in its integrity presents a different aspect must, of necessity, arise from the instigation of the Father of lies, even although we may charitably hope that those who do the actual work may not, in all cases, be conscious of the inspiration under which they act.¹

It requires to have the mind specially directed to the subject, to realize the serious extent to which the falsification of early Church History in the interest of Episcopacy has extended. The Apostolic Constitutions, and the writings attributed to Dionysius the Areopagite, will occur to every one as instances. But there are many more which are only known to scholars. And we may well believe, that as the forged Decretals have done more

¹ Some instances of falsification will be found in Appendix B.

harm to the Papacy than any other single thing, so the forgeries of those who wished, honestly perhaps, to advance the cause of Episcopacy, will, when the conscience of Christendom has once been aroused, be found to have done it more harm than all its enemies would have been able to effect.

In the following pages will be found every passage, or even allusion to Episcopacy which exists in the shorter, and most commonly received Greek Version of the Epistles of St. Ignatius.

‘Since then I have received your whole company, in the name of God, in the person of Onesimus, a man of love unsearchable, and your bishop in the flesh, I beseech you to love him according to Jesus Christ, and that ye be all like minded with him. For blessed is He who has granted unto you to be worthy to possess such a bishop.’¹

‘Now concerning my fellow-servant Burrhus, your deacon, who according to God is blessed in all things, I pray that he may abide in the honour of you and of the Bishop.’²

‘It is meet therefore in every way to glorify Jesus Christ, who hath glorified you, that ye may be made perfect in one obedience, that being in subjection to the Bishop and the Presbytery ye may be sanctified wholly.’³

‘For Christ, who is our indivisible life, is the Mind⁴ of the Father, as the bishops stationed throughout the world⁵ are in the mind of Christ.’⁶

‘Whence it becometh you to run agreeably to the mind of the bishop. For your renowned Presbytery,

¹ Ad Eph. c. 1.

² *Ibid.* c. 2.

³ *Ibid.* c. 2.

⁴ ἡ γνῶμη.

⁵ Κατὰ τὰ πάντα ὁρισθέντες.

⁶ Ad Eph. c. 3.

worthy of God, is united to the bishop like chords to a harp.’¹

‘For if I in a little time held such converse with your bishop, not according to man, but according to the Spirit, how much more do I count you happy, who are united to him as the Church is to Jesus Christ, and as Jesus Christ to the Father, that all things may be harmonious in unity! Let no man deceive you. Except any one be within the Altar, he lacketh the Bread of God. For if the prayer of one, or two, so much availeth, how much more the prayer of the bishop and the whole Church! He therefore that entereth not into unity, the same is a proud man, and hath judged himself, for it is written—God resisteth the proud. Let us be forward therefore not to resist the bishop, that we may be subject unto God.’²

‘And the more any one beholdeth the bishop keeping silence, the more let him reverence him. For every one whom the Master of the house sendeth into His household, him ought we to receive, even as Him that sent him. It is manifest therefore that we ought to have respect unto the bishop as unto the Lord Himself. Now Onesimus himself praiseth exceedingly your good order in God, that ye all live according to the truth, and that no division dwelleth among you; for neither do ye hearken unto any one, save Jesus Christ speaking in truth.’³

‘If Jesus Christ will vouchsafe it unto me through your prayer, and it be His will, I will declare unto you in the second letter which I write unto you, the dispensation whereof I have begun to speak, concerning the new

¹ Ad Eph. c. 4.

² *Ibid.* c. 5. The Syriac Version omits the whole of the fourth, fifth, and sixth chapters of this Epistle. They contain little else beyond the advocacy, and praise of episcopacy.

Ibid. c. 6.

Man, Jesus Christ, in the faith and love of the same, in His Passion and Resurrection; especially if the Lord will reveal it unto me, so that ye may every one come together by grace, through the name of the Lord, in one faith, and in Jesus Christ, of the race of David according to the flesh, that ye may be obedient unto the bishop and the presbyters, with undistracted mind, breaking one Bread, which is the medicine of immortality, the antidote that we should not die, but live in Christ everlastingly.' ¹

'Since therefore I have been counted worthy to behold you in the persons of Damas your bishop worthy of God, and the worthy presbyters, Bassus and Apollonius, and Sotion the deacon, my fellow-servant, I beseech him to be subject to the bishop as to the grace of God, and to the presbytery as to the law of Jesus Christ.' ²

'It becomes you not to think little of ³ the youth of the bishop, but according to the power of God the Father, to render unto him all reverence, even as I know the holy presbyters do reverence him, not having regard to the youth which appeareth, but as prudent, and yielding ⁴ unto him in God, yea, not unto him, but unto the Father

¹ Ad Eph. c. 20.

² Ep. ad Magnes. c. 2.

³ The Greek here is, 'Καὶ ὑμῖν δὲ πρέπει μὴ συγχρᾶσθαι τῇ ἡλικίᾳ τοῦ ἐπισκόπου, ἀλλὰ κατὰ ἔνταμιν Θεοῦ Πατρὸς πᾶσαν ἐντροπὴν αὐτῷ ἀπονέμειν . . . οὐ προσηληφόμενος τὴν φαινομένην νεωτερικὴν τάξιν, κ.τ.λ.' Blondellus and some foreign Presbyterians make a great point of the words, 'νεωτ. τάξιν,' as though they meant that Episcopacy was then of recent ecclesiastical institution, in contradistinction to the presbytery which had just been called 'the law of Jesus Christ'—but the context shows clearly that the expression refers to the youthfulness of the Magnesian Bishop. And the case against the modern theory of Episcopacy is far too strong to need pressing any doubtful arguments into the service. Cf. Alex. Natalis, II. E. Sæc. 4, Dissert. 44, § 14.

⁴ Συγχωροῦντας. In translating 'yielding,' I have used a stronger word than the Greek absolutely requires.

of Jesus Christ, the Bishop of all. Therefore for the honour of Him who hath loved us, we ought to be obedient, without any hypocrisy: for whoso deceiveth, deceiveth not only this bishop, who is seen, but likewise setteth at nought Him who is unseen. And for such an one there is an account, not unto flesh, but unto God, who knoweth the things which are secret.’¹

‘It behoveth us therefore not only to be called, but to be Christians; forasmuch as there are some who name the name of bishop, but do all things apart from him.’² Now such do not appear to me as having a good conscience, because they are not gathered together stedfastly according to the commandment.’³

‘Forasmuch therefore as I have beheld your whole multitude in faith and love, in the persons of those whom I named afore, I exhort you to do all things of one mind in God, the bishop presiding in the place of God, and the presbyters in the place of the Council of the Apostles, and the deacons, who are most sweet unto me, as entrusted with the ministry of Jesus Christ,⁴ who was with the Father before the worlds, and hath appeared in the time of the end. Be ye all therefore as having your conversation like unto God, and reverence one another, and let no one look upon his neighbour according to the flesh; but have love one to another continually in Jesus Christ. Let there be nothing with you which can cause divisions among you, but be ye at one with the bishop and the prelates,⁵ for an ensample and teaching of incorruption.’⁶

¹ Ad Eph. c. 3.

² *Χωρὶς αὐτοῦ.*

³ Ad Eph. c. 4.

⁴ *Διακονίαν Ἰ. Χριστοῦ.* I believe this means ministering unto Christ, in the persons of His earthly members.

⁵ *Τοῖς προκαθημένοις.* Cf. Heb. xiii. 7, 17. I suppose there can be no doubt that these prelates, so called, were the presbyters.

⁶ Ad Eph. c. 6.

‘As therefore the Lord did nothing without the Father, neither by Himself, nor by the Apostles, for He was united with the Father, so neither do ye do anything without the bishop and the presbyters. Neither do ye endeavour that anything should appear of good report unto you by yourselves apart. But let there be one prayer in common, one supplication, one mind, one hope, in love and in joy, without reproach. There is one Jesus Christ, than whom there is nothing better. Run ye therefore all together, as unto one temple of God, as unto one altar, as unto one Jesus Christ, who came forth from one Father, and returned even unto the Same.’¹

‘Be ye zealous therefore to be confirmed in the doctrines of the Lord and the Apostles, that all things whatsoever ye do, may prosper both in the flesh and in the spirit, in faith and love, in the Son and the Father and the Spirit, in the beginning and the end, together with your most worthy bishop, and the worthily woven spiritual crown of your presbyters, and your deacons according to God. Be ye subject to the bishop, and one to another, as Jesus Christ unto the Father, according to the flesh, and the Apostles to Christ, and to the Father, and to the Spirit, that your unity may be both in the flesh and in the spirit.’²

‘There salute you from Smyrna, the Ephesians who in all things have refreshed me, together with Polycarp, bishop of the Smyrnæans.’³

‘I know your blameless mind, and that ye abide inseparable in patience, not by practice only, but by nature, as Polybius your bishop hath made known unto me, who came by the will of God, and of Jesus Christ, to Smyrna; and therefore he rejoiced together with me, who am bound

¹ Ad Eph. c. 7.² *Ibid.* c. 13.³ *Ibid.* c. 15.

in Jesus Christ, so that I beheld your whole multitude in him.¹ Having received therefore through him your benevolence, which is according to God, I gave thanks, in that I found you, as I knew, to be followers of God.'²

'For when ye are subject to the bishop, as to Jesus Christ, ye appear to me to live not according to man, but according to Jesus Christ, who died for us, that we, believing in His Death, might not die. It is necessary therefore that even as ye do, ye should perform nothing without the bishop; and that ye should be subject to the Presbytery also, as to the Apostles of Jesus Christ, Who is our hope, in Whom if we live, we shall be found. The deacons also, who are the mystery³ of Jesus Christ, ought to please all men in all things. For they are not ministers of meats and drinks, but officers of the Church of God. Let them keep themselves therefore from offences as from fire.'⁴

'Likewise let all reverence the deacons as a commandment of Jesus Christ, and the bishop as Jesus Christ, the Son of the Father, but the presbyters as God's Senate, and a bond of union with the Apostles.'⁵ Without these,

¹ This seems to bring out with much clearness the theory of the bishop being the official delegate, or representative of a Christian community.

² Ad Trall. c. 1.

³ *Μυστήριον*, the MS. reading, which there is no need to alter for Vossius' conj. *μυστηρίων*.

⁴ Ad Eph. c. 2.

⁵ The Greek of this very remarkable passage is *τοὺς δὲ πρεσβυτέρους ὡς συνέδριον Θεοῦ, καὶ ὡς σύνδεσμον ἀποστόλων*. The terrible falsifications of so many ancient writings in the interest of Episcopacy make me suspicious of the object of Hefele's mistranslation of *σύνδεσμον* 'Απ. by 'concilium Apostolorum.' An examination of the use of the word shows, that in every instance it is employed to denote that which unites two, or more things with one another. I translate therefore as in the text, 'a bond, or chain of union with the Apostles.'

the Church is not named : and concerning whom I am persuaded that ye do even as I have said. I have received and retain with me in your bishop an example of your love.’¹

‘It becometh every one of you, but especially the presbyters, to refresh the bishop, in honour of the Father, of Jesus Christ, and of the Apostles.’²

‘Fare ye well in Jesus Christ, being subject to the bishop as unto the commandment, likewise also to the Presbytery.’³

In the Epistle to the Romans there is no mention of Episcopacy, nor even any allusion to Church government. At first sight it might appear strange that nothing is

This would seem to show that the presbytery by the laying on of their hands in the ordination of ministers, in which the bishop ordinarily took part as a fellow-presbyter, linked the Church on to the Apostles. See 1 Tim. iv. 14. Anyhow, Hefele did wrong to translate ‘*σύνδ.*’ by ‘concilium.’

To show the tricks which editors play, even in the nineteenth century, see what Hefele has done (or rather sanctioned by his adoption) with the former part of this clause. The MS. reading is, ‘*πάντες ἐντρεπέσθωσαν τοὺς διακόνους ὡς Ἰ. Χρ. ὡς καὶ τὸν ἐπίσκοπον,*’ which makes perfectly good sense. Yet the editors have altered the text to ‘*ἐντρεπ. τοὺς διακ. ὡς ἐντολὴν Ἰ. Χρ.,* Reverence the deacons as a commandment of Jesus Christ.’ And what is worse, they have done it on the ground stated by Hefele. ‘Nullibi Diaconi cum Christo ipso comparantur.’ This really means that they alter St. Ignatius’s text to suit their own doctrinal views. Well may we ask, in sorrow rather than anger—If they do these things in the nineteenth century, what may we not fear and suspect to have been done between the second century and the fifteenth?

¹ Ad Eph. c. 3. The quotations on Episcopacy in the sixth and seventh caps. of this Epistle are not given. The MS. text is so corrupt, and the manipulations, or as they prefer to call them, restorations by the editors, so numerous and extensive, that it is thought the warmest advocates of prelacy would not care to rely very much upon them. And they are not intrinsically important.

² Ad Eph. c. 12.

³ *Ibid.* c. 13.

said about the Bishop of Rome. But a little reflection will soon convince us that our surprise is really traceable to modern ideas, which it is almost impossible entirely to shake off. We try to grope our way amid the obscurity of the second century of Christianity by the help of the light cast back upon it by subsequent ages, but as long as we do this, the least of the errors into which we may expect to fall, will be to see things in false proportions. So in this particular case, as soon as we come to analyze the cause of our wonder, we find that it arises from our transferring our ideas derived from a period when the bishop, or patriarch of Rome was a personage of vast influence and importance, to the age of St. Ignatius, when the presidents, or chairmen of the Roman presbyters were, personally, of so small account that, as we have seen, the order even of their succession in the first century is involved in utter confusion.

It is most probable that the name of the then bishop of Rome was unknown to St. Ignatius, for if it had been, we can scarcely suppose he would have omitted to salute him. Any how, it is the fact, that he neither mentions him, nor alludes to him: and we have to consider what is the most reasonable explanation.

Eusebius says, that of St. Ignatius' Seven Epistles, he wrote four from Smyrna—those to the Churches of Ephesus, Magnesia, Tralles, and Rome, and three from Troas—those to the Philadelphians, the Smyrnæans, and to Polycarp.¹ The bishops of five of these six Churches he speaks of as though intimately acquainted with them. Of the bishop of Rome alone there is no mention. Now may it not be that these five Churches being all in the immediate neighbourhood of the places from whence he

¹ H. E. iii. 36.

wrote, he would be visited by most of their bishops, or presidents, and at least would hear of all of them by name, but the far greater comparative distance of Rome might preclude his knowing who the Roman president at the time might happen to be? It is difficult to account for this remarkable silence of St. Ignatius, both in his letters and in the Acts of his Martyrdom, upon any other hypothesis.

This same Epistle to the Romans throws some light upon another question of great importance—Wherein did that special connection of St. Peter with Rome, and that Primacy of the Roman Church among the other churches of God, throughout the world, which was unquestionably acknowledged by the Primitive Church, consist? It would seem, if we may judge by the address of St. Ignatius' Epistle, to have resided, potentially and primarily, in the Roman Church itself, as one corporate whole, consisting of both clergy and laity. The Roman Church therefore would be the real successor of St. Peter, and the Pope only by virtue of representing, that is to say, of being the *Persona* of that Church.¹ And this, probably, is the true meaning to be attached to such phrases as 'the Primate of Christendom,' the 'Primate of the Catholic Church.'

The great Bishop of Antioch thus addresses the Roman Church. 'Ignatius to Her which has obtained mercy in the majesty of the Father, Most High, and of Jesus Christ, His only Son, to the Church most dearly beloved and illuminated,² by the will of Him Who willeth all things which are according to the love of Jesus Christ

¹ Cf. the English use of the word 'parson,' said to be one of the most honourable titles a clergyman can enjoy, as being a *representative* of the Church.

² Such seems to be fairly the force of the pf. participles, 'ἡγαπημένη καὶ πεφωτισμένη.'

our God, to the Church which also has the chief seat, or which presides¹ in the place of the country of the Romans, worthy of God, worthy of honour, of blessedness and of praise, worthy of obtaining an answer to prayer,² worthily pure, and having the preeminence in love,³ called by the name of Christ and the Father, whom also I salute in the name of Jesus Christ, the Son of the Father—to them⁴ that according to the flesh and the spirit are at one in His whole commandment, inseparably fulfilled with the grace of God, and severed from every alien spot, all hail in Jesus Christ our God.’

These words of St. Ignatius seem to be one of the earliest indications of a Primacy of some sort or other existing in the Church of Rome herself, not in the Bishop of that Church. But there are numerous traces of such an idea a generation or two later on.⁵

To resume our quotations upon Episcopacy.

‘Ignatius, who also is Theophoros, to the Church of God the Father, and Lord Jesus Christ, which is in Phila-

¹ Προκάθηται.

² Ἀξιέπικεντος.

³ Προκαθημένη τῆς ἀγάπης. Hefele is not justified in translating this—‘universo cœtui charitatis præsidens.’

⁴ This last clause is important, as showing that St. Ignatius looked upon that Roman Church to which he assigns a certain pre-eminence as consisting of the whole body of the faithful. In the second chapter of this Epistle to the Romans St. Ignatius speaks of himself as the Bishop of Syria, but there seems to be some corruption in the text. The εἰς δύοσιν ἀπὸ ἀνατολῆς in this cap. seems to help in determining the meaning of the much debated τέρμα τῆς δύσεως, in Clem. R. ad Cor. i. c. 5.

⁵ To any one who wishes to study Ecclesiastical History apart from all spirit of partisanship, it is particularly trying to find Roman Catholic writers quoting the strong expressions of honour and esteem for the Church of Rome, which are found occasionally in the Ante-Nicene Fathers, to support the *personal* prerogatives of the Pope. They have nothing whatever to do with them.

delphia, having obtained mercy, and being firmly grounded in the mind of God—especially if they be at one with the bishop, and with the presbyters and deacons who are with him, who have been designated¹ according to the will of Jesus Christ, whom He hath firmly established, according to His own will, by His Holy Spirit.’²

‘I know that your bishop hath obtained his ministry, which pertaineth to all in common,³ neither of himself, nor of men, nor according to vain glory, but in the love of God the Father, and the Lord Jesus Christ. Of his meekness I have had great admiration; for his silence is more powerful than the words of those who speak vanity. For he is in harmony with the commandments, as a harp with its strings.’⁴

‘O ye children of light and truth, flee from division and from false doctrines. Where the Shepherd is, there do ye, like sheep, follow after. For there are many wolves, who seem worthy of credit, but they through pernicious pleasures take captive those who would betake themselves to God: but in your unity they shall have no place.’⁵

‘Depart from evil weeds, which Jesus Christ planteth not, for they are not the planting of the Father. And indeed I have not found division among you, but rather purity. For as many as are of God and Jesus Christ are with the Bishop. And whosoever will repent, and come to the unity of the Church, they also shall be of God, that they may live according to Jesus Christ. Be not deceived, my brethren; if any one follow him that maketh a division, he doth not inherit the kingdom of God. If

¹ Ἀποδεδειγμένους.

² Ad Philadelph.

³ Hefele, a most ardent advocate of Episcopacy, very unwarrantably translates τὴν διακονίαν, τὴν εἰς τὸ κοινὸν ἀνήκουσαν, *ministerium regendi cœtum*.

⁴ Ad Philadelph. c. 1.

⁵ *Ibid.* c. 2.

any one walk according to strange doctrine he doth not correspond to the Passion (of Christ.)¹

‘Be zealous then to use one Eucharist : for there is one Flesh of our Lord Jesus Christ, and one Cup in the unity of His Blood, one Altar, as likewise one Bishop, together with the presbyters and deacons, my fellow-servants, so that whatsoever ye do, ye may do it according to God.’²

‘Your prayer to God shall make me perfect, that I may attain to the inheritance for which I have received mercy, fleeing to the Gospel, as to the Flesh of Jesus, and to the Apostles as to the Presbytery of the Church.’³

‘I cried, being yet present with you, I spake with a loud voice—Give heed to the bishop and to the presbyters and deacons. Now some had a suspicion of me, that I spake these things, as knowing before the division of some. But He in Whom I am bound is my Witness, that I knew it not of mortal man. But the Spirit preached—Say these things : Without the bishop do nothing ; keep your flesh as the temple of God, love unity, flee divisions ; be ye followers of Jesus Christ, as He also was of His Father.’⁴

‘I therefore have done as much as in me lies, as a man who is fully prepared for unity. God dwelleth not where there is division and wrath. The Lord giveth remission of sins to all who repent, if they turn in penitence to union with God and the council of the bishop.’⁵

¹ Ad Philadelph. c. 3.

² *Ibid.* c. 4.

³ *Ibid.* c. 5.

⁴ *Ibid.* c. 7. The suspicion of interpolation in this chapter, or tampering with its original text, is to my mind simply overwhelming.

⁵ Ἐὰν μεταρρήσωσιν εἰς ἐνότητα Θεοῦ καὶ συνέριον τοῦ ἐπισκόπου. One may suspect that the original text had—*συν. τῶν πρεσβυτέρων. Συν. τοῦ ἐπισ.* can have little or no meaning, unless it be a synonym for the Bishop's Council of Presbyters. Hefele's ‘ad communionem cum Episcopo’ is quite inadmissible.

‘Priests¹ are good, but of greater excellence is Jesus Christ the High Priest, to Whom has been entrusted the holy of holies, Who only has been entrusted with the hidden things of God. He being the Son of the Father, through Him there enter in Abraham and Isaac and Jacob, and the Prophets and the Apostles and the Church. All these are in union with God. But the Gospel hath something of exceeding excellence, the appearing of our Lord Jesus Christ, His Passion and His Resurrection.’²

‘Forasmuch as it hath been declared unto me, that through your prayer, and the bowels of compassion which ye have in Jesus Christ, the Church which is at Antioch in Syria hath obtained peace, it becometh you, as a Church of God, to elect a deacon, to carry thither an embassage of God, to rejoice with them, when they are gathered together, and to glorify the name of God. Blessed be he in Jesus Christ, who shall be found worthy of such a ministry, and ye too shall be glorified. And if ye be willing, this shall not be a thing impossible to you on behalf of God’s name—even as some of the nearest churches have sent bishops, but some presbyters and deacons.’³

‘Be ye all followers of the bishop, as Jesus Christ followed the Father: and follow the presbyters as the apostles, and reverence the deacons as a commandment of God. Let no one do anything in matters pertaining to the Church, apart from the bishop. Let that be deemed a sure Eucharist, which is made by the bishop, or by him to whom he shall entrust it. Wheresoever the bishop appears, there let the people be. Apart from the bishop

¹ Ἱερεῖς, probably, though not certainly, Jewish priests.

² Ad Philadelph. c. 9.

³ *Ibid.* c. 10.

it is not lawful either to baptize,¹ or to celebrate a feast of charity : but whatsoever he approves, this is also well-pleasing unto God ; that everything which is done may be safe and steadfast.² It is a good thing to recognize God and the bishop. Whoso honoureth the bishop, is honoured by God. He that doeth anything without the bishop's knowledge, worships the devil.'³

'I salute the bishop, worthy of God, and the presbytery most worthy of God, my fellow-servants the deacons, and every one of you one by one, in the name of Jesus Christ.'⁴

'Ignatius, who is also Theophoros, to Polycarp, bishop of the Church of the Smyrnæans, rather to him who indeed has God for his bishop, and the Lord Jesus Christ, much greeting.'⁵

'Vindicate thy place with all bodily and spiritual efforts.'⁶

'Let nothing be done without thy will, neither do thou do anything without the will of God, as indeed thou dost not.'⁷

¹ Cf. Tertull. *De Baptismo*. See note to p. 12 of this work. Nothing can well be clearer, that the recommendation, not to perform spiritual acts apart from the bishop, was simply designed with the object of preserving unity. A child might see that this principle is just as applicable to Ordination, as it is to Baptism.

² Part of this chapter must be given in the Greek. Ὁπου ἂν φαρῇ ὁ ἐπίσκοπος, ἐκεῖ τὸ πλῆθος ἔστω· ὥσπερ ὅπου ἂν ᾗ ὁ Χριστὸς Ἰησοῦς, ἐκεῖ ἡ καθολικὴ ἐκκλησία. Many episcopal writers make a great point of this passage, as though it meant that a bishop was necessary to the existence of the Catholic Church. All I can say is, that I entirely fail to see the inference. *Ad Smyrnæos*, c. 8.

³ *Ad Smyrnæos*, c. 9. The interpolator seems to me to have here indulged in a much bolder flight than usual. It reminds us of the exhortation to laymen in the Apostolical Constitutions to look upon the bishop as 'their god upon earth,' page 28, note 1.

⁴ *Ad Smyrnæos*, c. 12. ⁵ *Ad Polycarp*. c. 1. ⁶ *Ibid*.

⁷ *Ad Polycarp*, c. 4. Μηδὲν ἄνευ γνώμης σου γινέσθω, κ.τ.λ. Considerable light is thrown upon the technical ecclesiastical use of this

‘If any one is able to abide in chastity, in honour of the Flesh of the Lord, so let him abide without boasting. For if he boast, he is undone. And if he think himself better than the bishop, he is turned to corruption. It is fitting that husbands and wives should be united in marriage with the will of the bishop, that marriage may be according to God, and not according to lust.’¹

‘Give heed unto the bishop, that God also may give heed unto you. I have refreshment in those who are obedient to the bishop, presbyters, and deacons.’²

I have thus then gathered into one focus, so to say, every word written, or alleged to be written, by St. Ignatius upon the subject of Episcopacy and the Orders of the Christian Ministry. This has been done because the case for modern Episcopacy will thus be presented in a stronger light than if the passages were read scattered throughout the Ignatian Epistles. And my object is to state the case for Episcopacy in the strongest possible manner, consistent with truth. And to what do these

phrase, *ἀνευ γ.*, which recurs so frequently in the Ignatian Epistles, by the famous Sixth Canon of the First Council of Nice. *Τὰ ἀρχαῖα ἔθη κρατεῖτω τὰ ἐν Αἰγύπτῳ καὶ Λιβύῃ, καὶ Περταπόλει, ὥστε τὸν ἐν Ἀλεξανδρείᾳ ἐπίσκοπον πάντων τούτων ἔχειν ἐξουσίαν, ἐπειδὴ καὶ τῷ ἐν τῇ Ῥώμῃ ἐπισκόπῳ . . . Καθόλου δὲ πρόδηλον ἐκείνο ὅτι εἴ τις χωρὶς γνώμης μετροπολίτου γένοιτο ἐπίσκοπος, τὸν τοιοῦτον ἡ μεγάλη σύνοδος ὥρισε μὴ δεῖν εἶναι ἐπίσκοπον.* Here we have, as in other places, the word *γίγνομαι* applied to the appointment of bishops. It is interesting to trace how the Canon Law of the Church grew up from very small beginnings until it attained the wonderful height of perfection which it reached in later ages. The same spirit which led Ignatius, or his interpolator, to forbid even Baptism *ἀνευ γνώμης ἐπισκόπου*, led the Nicene Fathers to forbid appointing bishops *χωρὶς γνώμης μετροπολίτου*. But how easy it is to see that everything of this kind rests only upon ecclesiastical usage, or Canon Law, not upon any Divine institution! Divine sanction can be claimed only for the Christian Ministry of the Presbyterate.

¹ Ad Polycarp. c. 5.

² *Ibid.* c. 6.

words of the Saint, when fairly and impartially summed up, amount? There is positively nothing in which moderate Catholics and Episcopalians, and moderate Presbyterians might not perfectly agree. There is a further advantage gained by collecting all these passages into one. On the general principle of *omne ignotum pro magnifico*, there is a prevalent impression that because St. Ignatius is known to have said some strong things about obedience to bishops, the Church, and the world in general, have a kind of undefined idea that the martyr bishop of Antioch is a witness against the true theory of Primitive Church government, and in favour of autocratic and irresponsible Prelacy. Nothing could be a greater mistake. Even scholars who read the original Greek for themselves, scarcely perhaps realize with what great moderation he does speak; and how little support he really gives to mistaken theories of Church government.¹ The surest

¹ Bishop Pearson, who, as far as I have examined his works, appears honest in his quotations and translations from early Christian authors, can scarcely be said to be always quite fair in his deductions from them. Every reader of the foregoing pages must have observed that there is not one single word inculcating, or implying any special duty of obedience on the part of *presbyters* to the bishop. In every instance where obedience is spoken of as due to him, he is conjoined with the presbyters, sometimes with the deacons. Yet in the face of his knowledge of these Ignatian Epistles, Bishop Pearson could write thus: 'Absurde locutus esset Ignatius, ipse etiam Episcopus, si . . . cum Presbyteros moneret, ut suo quique Episcopo parerent, ipsos a quibus obedientiam postulabat Episcopos, aut illum cui obedientiam præstandam docebat, Presbyterum appellasset. Æque enim absonum videtur ut quis Episcopus Episcopo, aut Presbyteros Presbytero subjectos esse debere doceret.' We may ask in amazement, where does St. Ignatius warn presbyters to be obedient each to his own bishop, where does he speak of the obedience to be rendered by presbyters to the bishop, where does he say anything about presbyters being in subjection to the bishop?

Such things are saddening beyond description. It is time indeed

key to unlock the mind of Ignatius, the truest clue to his real thoughts, is, to enter with perfect sympathy into that darling object of desire with the early Christians, that all the Churches of God, throughout the world, might remain in perfect unity one with another in the love of Jesus Christ, and in the doctrine which had been delivered by the Apostles. And it is evident that he regarded the development of the Episcopal system, the nascent germ of which was already in existence in many places, and which had never been disapproved of or condemned by the Apostles, as the best safeguard which could be devised for maintaining this unity.

When St. Paul said in arguing against the Corinthian Church retaining an ecclesiastical custom peculiar to themselves, 'we have no such practice, nor the Churches of God,' he laid down an important principle. St. Ignatius, with a mind of very considerable powers, seems to have felt that it would be far easier to restrain individual and independent churches from falling into extravagancies, and thus endangering the common unity, if each church should have its own head, in the sense of a recognized personal representative, than if the contemporary democratic form of government, of such a church as Corinth, for instance, were to be the normal state of things in the Catholic Church. At the same time it is probable enough that St. Ignatius did not see all the far reaching consequences of his theory, both for good and for evil, as they came to be developed when the Church herself grew from a tender plant to a mighty tree which overshadowed the earth. The only conclusion which can be gathered with anything like certainty from his Epistles is that, according to his

that the History of the Primitive Church should be written afresh. See Vind. Ign. Pt. II. p. 548. Lib. of Ang. Cath. Theol.

view, the bishop represented the unity of the Presbyterate in each individual church, and by consequence the visible unity of all the members of that church one with another, and with Christ the Lord, their invisible Head. The bishop was at once a sign and a means of unity. There is really not one word in the Epistles which by any fair interpretation implies more than this. There is not a word which implies that a bishop is anything more than the president, or chairman of the College of Presbyters, or that, apart from this office, he is, originally and essentially, on anything but terms of perfect equality with them. That this idea is the true explanation of the Ignatian Epistles receives confirmation from the author's far more frequent use of the abstract 'Presbytery'¹ than of the concrete 'Presbyters,'² to denote the second rank of Christian Ministers.

St. Cyprian again, rather more than a century subsequent, looking out over the widely extended Church of his day, aimed at the preservation of unity by means of the Episcopate. His own actually expressed theory is the most moderate development of that of Ignatius. It is, that all bishops were essentially equal one with another in order and power; but that the bishop of Rome, as primate of the Catholic Church, represented the principle of the unity of the Episcopate. It is very doubtful if St. Cyprian himself would have formally denied the original equality of presbyters with bishops. With this, however, we are not now concerned. But what we may be very sure of is, that the great Patriarch of Antioch would have been fearfully shocked at any such denial. He would have been shocked, too, could he have foreseen some of the consequences to which his theory ultimately

¹ Πρεσβυτέριον.

² Πρεσβύτεροι.

led in the minds of too eager advocates. There is no reason to suppose that when St. Ignatius advocated the blessing of close union with the bishop, he intended to condemn other contemporary Churches where a different system of Church government prevailed—as Corinth for example, where there was no Bishop then, or for some time after.¹ Nor, taking St. Ignatius' words as a whole, is there any reason to think that he would have condemned the ordination of presbyters by other presbyters,² if they did not do it against the will of the bishop, any more than he condemned their celebration of the Eucharist, or their administration of Baptism, under the like circumstances. Indeed argument from analogy would prove the contrary. Inasmuch as the celebration of these sacraments with the bishop's will and consent was conceded to presbyters, it is but natural to suppose that they might perform upon

¹ See the uncertain Author; Quæst. in V. et N. T., Quæs. 48, whose writings are printed by the Benedict. Ed. with the works of St. Aug. t. iii. p. 153.

Knowing as we do, the way in which ancient documents have been tampered with in the interests of Prelatic autocracy, one may feel justified in a suspicion that there has been some manipulation of the following passage of Hegesippus, preserved by Eusebius iv. 22 : *Καὶ ἐπέμενεν ἡ ἐκκλησία ἡ Κορινθίων ἐν τῷ ὀρθῷ λόγῳ, μέχρι Πρίμου ἐπισκοπέοντος ἐν Κορίνθῳ· οἷς συνέμιξα πλέων εἰς Ῥώμην, κ.τ.λ.* Who was this Primus? Was this his real name, a singular one for a Greek community? Or was he really the first bishop of the Corinthian Church? Unless there has been a corruption of the text of Hegesippus, why do we find *οἷς συνέμιξα* instead of *ᾧ συν.*, which would have been more natural?

² This seems to me to follow with perfect logical consistency from what he says; Ad Magnes. c. 4 : *Καὶ τινες ἐπίσκοπον μὲν καλοῦσιν, χωρὶς δὲ αὐτοῦ πάντα πράσσουσιν.* It is clear that he would put Presbyteral Ordination and Presbyteral Celebration of the Eucharist upon the same footing, if done apart from the bishop. The *καὶ τινες κάλουσιν* is exactly the kind of way in which any one would speak of an ecclesiastical arrangement when it was coming into general use, but was not completely established.

occasion the rite of Ordination. This is an argument which ought to weigh powerfully with Anglicans, because the English Church has degraded Orders from the rank of a sacrament, which it holds in other churches, to that of a rite or ceremony, not instituted by Christ Himself. Indeed it is difficult to understand how Anglicans, who are bound to believe that Ordination has 'not the like nature of sacraments with Baptism and the Lord's Supper, for that it has not any visible sign or ceremony ordained of God,'¹ can find it consistent with their protestations of loyalty to hold that Episcopacy, which is but one part of the institution of Orders in the ministry of the Christian Church, is of Divine appointment, when they hold that there is no visible sign or ceremony ordained by God for *Orders themselves*—including bishops, priests, and deacons. This is indeed taking a part to be greater than the whole. Again, it is somewhat anomalous that the English Church, which says that Confirmation and Orders are not to be taken for sacraments of the Gospel, such as are Baptism and the Eucharist, should yet permit the exercise of these higher ministrations to all presbyters, and restrict the lower to bishops only. This anomaly of course applies to some extent to all episcopal churches since the innovations of the Third and Fourth Centuries, but with special force to the Anglican Branch. It would, however, be wrong to attribute such crudities of thought, and such anomalies in practice, to St. Ignatius.

All we can say is, that he was not endowed with the gift of prescience. His error, if such indeed it can be called, was that of all earnest advocates of a new theory, inability to see its weak side, and where it would be likely to break down in practice. If he could have done

¹ Art. xxiv.

this, he would have been more than a prophet. He would have foreseen the dizzy height to which his meek presidents of presbyters would ultimately ascend; and would have provided against it by strong checks and warnings in his Epistles. Could he have looked onward for a few hundred years, his writings would have been as full of exhortations to the bishop to do nothing without the presbytery and the people, as they now are to the people to do nothing without the bishop. But Ignatius could not foresee that in about two hundred years from the time of his martyrdom, a determined effort would be made by a few bishops of great cities to deprive altogether their fellow-bishops in country places of the right to ordain priests, and to place restrictions upon the presbyters of cities which had been unknown in preceding ages.¹ If he could have foreseen this, then he might also have foreseen that the declaration by the Vatican Council in the latter part of the nineteenth century, of the separate and personal infallibility of the Bishop of Rome is nothing more than the natural outcome and the legitimate development of the episcopal theories for which he contended in the beginning of the second century. Once recognize the principle that a bishop could, under any circumstances whatever, act independently of his clergy and people, but that they in like case could not act independently of him, and the transition from the presbyter-bishop of a petty town in Asia Minor, A.D. 120, to Pius IX. is easy and natural. And though there is not the slightest reason to suppose that St. Ignatius contemplated such an idea as the bishop's irresponsibility to the Church over which he was said to preside, yet he did not provide against its creeping in, as in fact it did creep in, and at

¹ See Appendix B.

last produced the bitter fruit of that utter disorganization of the whole Church of Christ which we now behold.¹ And wonderful as it seems, the tiny germ of all this wrong and distress and perplexity lay wrapped up concealed in the apparently innocent exhortations of the humble-minded martyr president of the Primitive Church of Antioch. And the more we come to regard the history of the

¹ The recent declaration of the Vatican is merely the final coping-stone of that edifice of irresponsibility on the part of Church governors, which has been in process of building up, century after century. The Old Catholics of Germany, in thinking that they can take their stand at the year 1871, and say to such a gigantic system, 'Hitherto shalt thou go, and no further, and here shall thy proud waves be stayed,' might just as well hope to arrest the advance of the whirlwind at any particular stage of its progress. What constitutes the great offence of the Vatican Council, and makes it to be perhaps *læsa majestas* against the whole Church, is, not the mere decree that such or such a sinful mortal, under certain circumstances is infallible. That might, or might not be the case; and taken by itself, it would not be of any special importance which way it were determined. But the terrible wrong which has been done to the Body and the Bride of Christ has been the pronouncing any one to be infallible *apart from the Body*. This is as though the head should say to the hands, or the feet, 'I have no need of you.' It is the sin of one member against all the rest. This will be seen in the action of this unhappy Council. 'During the last week of its Session, the bishops of the minority were willing to accept Papal Infallibility, if it were qualified by the phrase 'nexus testimonio Ecclesiæ.' This limitation was rejected, and the Definition was finally carried in these words, 'Romani Pontificis definitiones *ex sese*, non autem ex consensu Ecclesiæ, irreformabiles esse.' The Catholic Church ought not to forget, for God will not forget, that this high treason against her, has been the work of the Episcopate. The Episcopate began by arrogating to themselves the prerogatives of the whole body of Christians, and ended their career by an act, at once of treason and suicide, bestowing upon another what was not theirs to give. Thus, then, we may see, that all General Councils, so far as they are only the voice of the Episcopate, are fallible indeed—so far as they express the mind and conscience of the whole Church, they are infallible.

Catholic Church as one grand and mighty whole, the more clearly shall we see that this was so.

Next in importance to their bearing upon the question of Church government, the Ignatian Epistles are valuable for what may be gathered from them, both by way of direct statement, and indirect inference, with reference to the inspiration of the New Testament.

It is not a little startling to find that though these Epistles were written, certainly not earlier than A.D. 115 or 116, or ten years at the least after the publication of the last of the Four Gospels, and about three quarters of a century after the supposed date of the First Gospel, there should yet be so very few, if any, undoubted citations from any of those Writings. There is abundant evidence to prove that St. Ignatius was well acquainted with the *facts* of our Lord's Life and Death; and he quotes, in substance, several sentences which we know from other sources were spoken by Christ. But it would, in the absence of any marks of quotation, such as, 'it is written,' be simply impossible to tell whether he derived them from a written authority, or from that great unwritten book of tradition, which was then fresh and clear in its testimony, and open for inspection to all the world. I will endeavour to give the evidence for and against St. Ignatius' being acquainted with a written Gospel, as concisely and as fairly as I can.

In the first place it is right to observe that no argument can well be drawn from his silence—from his failing to quote such and such sayings and actions of Christ with the prefix, 'it is written.' No one denies that the Old Testament Scriptures were then in existence, yet he scarcely ever quotes them. Again, of doubtful bearing in either direction are such passages as the following, in the Epistle to the Philadelphians, in which the Gospel is spoken

of—‘fleeing to the Gospel as to the Flesh of Jesus Christ.’¹ This may refer, either to a written book, or to the oral preaching of the Gospel. So too in the same Epistle, after saying that the Patriarchs, the Prophets and Apostles are all one in the unity of the Church, he adds, ‘But the Gospel hath something more excellent, the appearing of our Lord Jesus Christ, His Passion and His Resurrection.’² Still, whatever it might be that the martyr had in his mind, one thing seems indubitable, that so late as the death of Ignatius, the fair edifice of Christianity rested not upon a written book, but upon the great facts of the Incarnation, the Life and Death of Jesus Christ. There is, however, one passage in the Epistle to the Smyrnæans,³ which, if carefully considered, does seem to point to the existence of a *written* Gospel. ‘It becometh us therefore to hold aloof from such, those namely who abstain from the Eucharist and common prayer, but to give heed to the Prophets, and chiefly to the Gospel, in which His Passion hath been manifested to us, and His Resurrection perfected.’⁴ The antithesis between the Prophets whose predictions were known only by their writings, and the Gospel which showed the fulfilment of those predictions, would seem naturally to point to a written, rather than to an oral Gospel.

But if Ignatius referred to a written Gospel, or narrative of the Life of Christ, to what actual book did he refer? Was it to any one of the four Evangelists, Matthew, Mark, Luke, or John? This question it is impossible to answer with absolute certainty. But it

¹ Cap. 5.² Cap. 9.³ Cap. 7.

⁴ Προσέχειν δὲ τοῖς προφήταις, ἐξαρέτως δὲ τῷ εὐαγγελίῳ, ἐν ᾧ τὸ πάθος ἡμῶν δεδήλωται, καὶ ἡ ἀνάστασις τετελείωται. The use of the perfects is some slight confirmation of the supposition that a written Gospel is intended.

seems more than probable, that if he did cite a written Gospel, it was *not* one of the first three. There may be a little more internal evidence in favour of the fourth, but scarcely sufficient to invest it with any very high degree of probability. This, however, is a question which every one must solve for himself, if he would derive any satisfaction from the solution. All that can be done here is to state two facts, which appear to militate strongly against the supposition that Ignatius was acquainted with, or if acquainted, that he quoted from any of our four existing Gospels. One has a negative bearing—that he nowhere cites six consecutive words from any of the four Evangelists now known as such. The other is positive. If he quotes written books in his accounts of the actions of our Lord, then those books contained some things which our Gospels do not contain.¹ There is some slight external evidence for thinking that these books were the Gospel according to the Hebrews, and the Protevangelium ascribed to St. James.² But this must have been before they were corrupted by the Ebionites; or Ignatius and others might have possessed uncorrupted copies: for there is no reason to suppose that the Gospel according to the Hebrews, in its original form, gave any countenance to heterodoxy.³

¹ Ep. ad Ephes. c. 19.

² This was St. Jerome's opinion. Ep. ad Smyrn. c. 3. It is of course possible, that St. Ignatius may have cited *memoriter* those passages of the Four Gospels where he substantially agrees with them, and the Gospel of the Hebrews, or some other lost Gospel, or some unwritten tradition, where he departs from them.

³ Can it be that Ignatius had in his hands, and was familiar with an original Syriac Gospel, compiled by some personal follower of our Lord, which has been lost ages since? If such a supposition may be allowed, he may, when writing letters in Greek, have translated the substance of this Gospel, as occasion required.

What brings this apparent want of familiarity with the four Evangelists into greater prominence is the circumstance, that almost every page of the Epistles betrays, to say the least, an intimate acquaintance with Pauline language and habits of thought. It would be hard for the attentive student not to be of opinion that he had read several, if not all of St. Paul's Epistles.

A few remarks upon the arguments which might be put forward in behalf of St. Ignatius' claim to possess an inspiration, similar in kind to that of the canonical writers of the New Testament, may not unfittingly close this subject.

At the end of the Epistle to the Ephesians he appears to speak as though he looked for a supernatural gift¹ to aid him, in writing a subsequent letter, to teach what might conduce to their spiritual advancement, in almost exactly the same kind of way that St. Paul does.² In the superscription of his Epistle to the Trallians, 'he writes to them,' he says, 'in an Apostolic character.' In the third, and two following chapters of this same

¹ Μάλιστα εἰν ὁ Κύριός μοι ἀποκαλύψῃ. C. 20.

² In order to obtain correct, scriptural views of what is meant by revelation, and inspiration, nothing would be of so much use as to compare the language which St. Paul applies to himself, with the words which he addresses to the members of a Christian Church, or community. Thus writing to the Corinthian Church, he asks (1 Cor. xiv. 6) what shall he profit them, unless he shall speak to them ἢ ἐν ἀποκαλύψει, ἢ ἐν γνώσει, ἢ ἐν προφητείᾳ, ἢ ἐν διδαχῇ? Then in this very chapter, speaking of the Corinthians themselves, and apparently of ordinary believers among them, he says, 'When ye come together, every one of you hath ψαλμὸν, διδαχὴν, γλῶσσαν, ἀποκαλύψιν, ἑρμηνείαν.' How is it possible to maintain a distinction, *in genere*, between ἀποκάλυψις as applying to St. Paul, and ἀποκάλυψις as applying to a Corinthian believer? And if we allow the gift of ἀποκάλυψις to any ordinary Corinthian Christian, by what process of reasoning do we deny it to St. Ignatius?

Epistle, he appears to write with very much the same sense of authority, and inspired knowledge, that any Apostle of Christ might have done.¹

When in the Epistle to the Romans he depreciates himself in comparison with Saints Peter and Paul,² and adds, that he will not command like them, although his beautiful humility shines forth very conspicuously, it is not difficult to see that his spirit and his language were similar, in their tone, to the manner in which St. Paul addressed himself to Philemon.³ Lastly, in the seventh chapter of the Epistle to the Philadelphians, although the text is corrupt, and has been most unmistakeably tampered with, it is clear, unless we reject the whole chapter as spurious, that he claims to be possessed of inspiration in its highest form.⁴ All this, however, it is almost needless to say, is not the slightest evidence against the theory of possible interpolation by a later writer.

If we turn from what St. Ignatius believed about himself, to what his contemporaries, or the Christians of the immediately succeeding generation thought about him,

¹ Ἐν ἀποστολικῷ χαρακτῆρι.

² Οὐχ ὡς Πέτρος καὶ Παῦλος διατάσσομαι ὑμῖν. Ἐκεῖνοι ἀπόστολοι, ἐγὼ κατάκριτος· ἐκεῖνοι ἐλεύθεροι, ἐγὼ δὲ μέχρι νῦν δοῦλος (cap. 4). Just as St. Paul, when he was alive, called himself the δοῦλος of Christ, and the δοῦλος of all men, so now that he was departed to the Lord, does St. Ignatius call him ἐλεύθερος, but himself δοῦλος.

³ St. Paul says to Philemon:—‘Though I might be much bold in Christ, to command thee’ (ἐπιτάσσειν), using a similar word to the διατάσσειν of St. Ignatius, ‘yet for love’s sake, I rather beseech thee, being such an one as Paul the aged, and now also a prisoner of Jesus Christ.’ We can scarcely be mistaken in believing that Ignatius had read the Epistle to Philemon.

⁴ Τὸ δὲ Πνεῦμα, i.e. the Holy Ghost, speaking by the mouth of Ignatius, ἐκήρυσσαν, λέγον τάδε, χωρὶς τοῦ ἐπισκόπου μηδὲν ποιεῖτε, τὴν σάρκα ὑμῶν ὡς ναὸν Θεοῦ τηρεῖτε, κ.τ.λ. The χωρὶς τοῦ ἐπ. μηδὲν ποιεῖτε is not only a wretched, and self-evident interpolation, but a particularly clumsy one.

we find some very remarkable utterances. In the narrative of his Martyrdom, which is at least of venerable antiquity, he is called ‘the disciple of the Apostle John,’ as though he were his chief, or favourite disciple, ‘and a man in all respects apostolic.’ At the end of the same chapter, he is called ‘a godlike, or divine lamp, which by means of his explanation of the holy Scriptures illuminated the mind of all men.’

In describing his joyful meeting with St. Polycarp at Smyrna, it is said, that they had both been formerly fellow-disciples of the holy Apostle John. It is added that he communicated to Polycarp spiritual gifts; the language used being similar to that employed by the Apostle Paul in his Epistle to the Roman Church.¹ And to obtain a share in these spiritual gifts, by which something supernatural seems clearly to be intended, all the cities and churches of Asia, in the persons of their bishops, presbyters, and deacons, pressed forward to visit him. The letters of thanks which he addressed to these Churches, for their loving ministration to his wants, are said to ‘distil a spiritual grace with prayer and exhortation.’² What higher commendation than this could be given to an Apostolic Epistle? Lastly, he is said to know things by the Spirit: and as the article is used, we may fairly conclude that the Holy Ghost is intended, that same Divine Spirit of God, Who spake by the Prophets.

It would be wearisome to give the multitude of later testimonies which might be adduced for the divine spirituality of St. Ignatius’ writings. Only one therefore is selected—that of Tillemont, because the Author is at

¹ See note 1. p. 215.

² Γραμμάτων εὐχαριστῶν ἐκπεμφθέντων πρὸς αὐτάς, πνευματικὴν μετ’ εὐχῆς καὶ παραινέσεως ἀποσταζόντων χάριν. C. 4.

once one of the greatest and most illustrious, and at the same time most orthodox of ecclesiastical writers, and one who, we may be very sure, would never knowingly or willingly contravene the most unimportant of the traditions of the Catholic Church. Speaking of the Epistle to the Romans, 'The style,' he says, 'is as glowing and burning as the subject matter is wonderful ; and there is perhaps nothing in the tradition of the Church which is so worthy of the Holy Spirit, Who speaks in the martyrs.'¹

After such testimonies, ancient and modern, who that are not wedded to a theory can help, not so much coming to the conclusion, as having it forced upon them, that the distinctions between inspired and uninspired men, between canonical and uncanonical Scriptures, are merely arbitrary divisions which have been invented by technical theologians, which, as soon as they come to be examined, proclaim upon their very face their character of arbitrariness? And thus the life and writings of this primitive martyr of Antioch, supposing them to be genuine and authentic, in the main, become effective auxiliaries for the overthrow of two of those idols which the mistakes of later ages have reared upon the shrine of superstition—prelatic pride and autocracy, and the theory, that the gift of the Divine Spirit to instruct the Church by writing, came to an end with the close of the year after Christ 100 ; or, as soon as the ink became dry in the pen of St. John the Evangelist, after he had written the concluding portion of his holy Gospel.

I have already intimated that I incline to the opinion that there can be no reasonable doubt that the Seven

¹ *Mémoires*, vol. i. p. 201. Première Ed. de Venise.

Epistles of St. Ignatius, in what is called the shorter Greek recension, are in some sort really his. If there were no other evidence of this than the fact, that Eusebius says he wrote seven letters, from which he proceeds to give extracts, brief indeed, but all found in the now extant Epistles, it would seem to be sufficient. For the counter supposition, which, on the hypothesis of *total* forgery, would be required, namely, that these few sentences quoted by Eusebius were inserted, like flies in amber, in the extraneous surrounding mass, would carry with it almost an air of absurdity. When to this is added the further fact, that the Ignatian Epistles are cited by Polycarp, Irenæus, the heathen Lucian probably, by Origen, Athanasius, and Jerome, and that their citations or references all substantially agree with what we now possess, strong faith, bordering upon credulity, would seem to be needed, rather by those who deny, than by those who affirm that we do, to some extent, possess the writings of this Apostolic Father.

But the question of interpolation stands upon very different ground: and it may be not unprofitable to examine it. Hefele pleads almost passionately against the charge, and dismisses it with these words—‘The suspicion of interpolation does not deserve the very slightest credit, and I am fully persuaded that it argues a mediocrity of judgment which is by no means golden. Let them be the Epistles of Ignatius, as they are, or not at all.’ The question, however, cannot be thus dismissed. From the very first bringing to light of these writings in modern times, the tendency of the entire stream, so to say, of the ablest criticism has been to reduce their bulk. In the first place, the Epistles have been reduced in number. From the Fifteen, which once passed current under the name of Ignatius, they have

come down to Seven. Then of these Seven, there are extant two Greek exemplars—one shorter, the other longer. With regard to these, Hefele says—‘All critics, almost to a man, affirm that the shorter is to be preferred to the longer.’ And at this stage, the battle of criticism may be said at the present moment to pause, for the combatants to take breath. This then is clear, viewing the matter impartially, that the defenders of the authenticity of the Epistles have been losing ground for centuries.

When it is determined, as it may be assumed to be, that the longer Greek recension is interpolated, it is of course no *proof* that the shorter one is also, but it at least gives rise to the suspicion that it *may* be. And certainly, curiously enough, at the very time when this suspicion of the shorter recension being itself interpolated was beginning to assume greater strength and consistency among critics, there is discovered a Syriac version of three of these Letters, which is shorter than the shortest Greek form.

Although, as I hope I have shown, there is nothing on the subject of Episcopacy which—assuming the genuineness of the Epistles as they stand, in the generally received Greek form—a primitive Father might not have said, yet there will be felt in most minds an uncomfortable under-current of suspicion, that after all, perhaps he did not say it. And the suspicion is not altogether without reason. The Epistles, everybody knows, *have* been tampered with—but who is able to say how far? Then there enters in this terrible question of Episcopacy. We are aware, as a simple matter of fact, that there is nothing in the way of forgery, or falsification, which some writers both ancient and modern would shrink from in support of this darling institution, thinking the while, that by thus acting

they were doing God service. This being so, is it not more than a little remarkable that the Author of the translation into Syriac should have omitted every word in the Epistles he translated, which bore upon the subject of Episcopacy? Remarkable of course, that is, if such passages ever existed. Surely, Hefele's attempt at an explanation, that this Syriac translator was a monk, or an ascetic, and that he only translated for the use of himself and his brethren such portions of the Epistles as he thought would be of practical service, will not hold water for an instant. As Cureton well observed, 'if this were so, why did he translate for the use of monks, some exhortations bearing upon the duty of husbands towards their wives, and wives towards their husbands?' Then why should a monk have excised all exhortations and remarks about bishops and presbyters, from a translation which he made for practical use? Such parts would have been of the greatest possible practical value. Some monks were bishops, many were priests. And those who were neither, had, it may be supposed, duties which they owed to bishops and priests as their spiritual superiors, duties in which it was well that they should be instructed, and in which nothing could instruct them better than these disputed passages of St. Ignatius, *if* they were indeed his.

So far as discovery has been made at present, only three of the seven Epistles have been found in the Syriac Version, translated by Cureton—they are those to the Romans, the Ephesians, and St. Polycarp. To speak of the Epistle to the Romans first. This Epistle in its Greek form, has always differed from the rest, in respect of its not containing any allusions to Episcopacy, nor any exhortations about the honour and obedience due to bishops. Is there then nothing significant in the fact,

that in this one Epistle the Syriac agrees closely with the Greek, having scarcely any omissions? This was noticed by Hefele; who observes that the Syriac Version of this Epistle has no such extensive omissions as we have seen in the same version of the Epistle to the Ephesians. Can there be a reasonable doubt, that the original cause of this difference is to be sought for in the fact, that the Greek of the Epistle to the Ephesians is full of remarks bearing upon Church government, and that, being interpolations, they did not occur in the Greek copy which the Syriac translator had before him? The Epistle to the Romans, on the other hand, had no such passages: and in this single instance the Syriac and the Greek agree. Hefele, in his *Prolegomena*, in endeavouring to rebut the charge of interpolation, had already asked, why, if the passages upon Episcopacy were forged, the interpolator should, of all the Epistles, have abstained from tampering with the Epistle to the Romans? It is sufficient to reply that we must deal with facts as we find them; and that it is impossible, after the lapse of 1,500 years, or more, to determine all the reasons which influenced the conduct of a forger, so many ages since. And yet a possible reason may be assigned. Some learned men, chiefly of the Tubingen school, have been of opinion that all the epistles are entirely fabrications, forged at Rome about the middle of the second century. Suppose, instead of adopting this view, we accept a modification of it, and suppose that the disputed passages were interpolated by some one at Rome, then there would, at once, be a probable reason for the omission of interpolations in the Epistle to the Church of the Romans. The original Epistle would be carefully preserved, and accessible to all the Roman Christians, probably even read in their assemblies. A forger at Rome would have no chance of success,

in interpolating this particular Epistle, and would wisely let it alone. Hence it has fortunately been preserved to us in its integrity.

There is yet one more ground of suspicion, and that is, that taking the Epistles as a whole, and speaking very generally, the suspected passages occur, for the most part, at the beginning and the end of a Letter.

To sum up—I am very far from having the vanity to suppose that I can settle the Ignatian controversy; but if, judging by the past, a prophecy might be hazarded respecting the future, it would be this—that the question will be warmly debated for some generations, and then, at last, nearly all critics will be agreed upon two points—1. That the Seven Ignatian Epistles are really the work of the great Patriarch; but 2. They are his, minus the disputed passages.

CHAPTER XII.

SAINT POLYCARP—HIS LIFE AND MARTYRDOM.

ALTHOUGH the long interval of a very eventful half century elapsed between the martyrdoms of St. Ignatius and his fellow-disciple St. Polycarp, yet the history of one may be not unfittingly followed by the history of the other, for the narrative of the actions of the great presbyter of Smyrna breathes the spirit of the purest age of the Church, and carries Apostolic traditions to the middle of the second century after the Birth of Jesus Christ.

The chronology of St. Polycarp's life is involved in all but insuperable difficulties, if indeed they are not altogether insuperable. The only date upon which we can feel any well-founded reliance is that of his Martyrdom, which, it is nearly certain, took place in the year 166. or 167.¹

The more we study early Church History, the more we shall have occasion to notice and deplore the confusion which the advocacy of later prelatie views has introduced into every department of it. And chronology has by no means escaped. The number of facts which had to be twisted into shape is all but infinite. And when every-

¹ The chronology of St. Polycarp is treated by Tillemont with his usual learning, and with even more than his usual candour and judgment. The date given above is the conclusion at which he arrives. Bishop Pearson, alone amongst learned men, places it many years earlier, in 147. He was probably influenced, unconsciously, by his strong episcopal views.

thing had been done, still the facts were there, awaiting candid investigation, and ready to tell their own tale to any one who was willing to question them in an impartial spirit.

Let us then place two facts in juxtaposition, and attend to what they say. St. Polycarp died A.D. 166, or 167. No critic, arguing solely on historical grounds, places it earlier than this; though one scholar fixes it as late as 178. The other fact is, that when the holy Confessor was asked by the Proconsul to curse Christ, he gave that answer, so marvellous in its beauty, which will make the hearts of Christians in all generations to thrill with admiration, until the end of time—‘Fourscore and six years have I been His servant, and never hath He done me any wrong: how then can I blaspheme my King, Who hath saved me?’ Now the actual words which are here used might, taken by themselves, admit of two meanings—either that Polycarp had been born of Christian parents, who had dedicated him to God in his infancy, so that he was then eighty-seven years old, or else, that in his early years he had been a heathen, and had been converted, when he was come to maturer age.

If then we take the first of these alternatives, St. Polycarp must have been a Christian youth, scarcely more than a lad, of about twenty years of age, at the death of St. John in the first year of the second century; and every reasonable mind will see at once the utter improbability that he should have been appointed by that Apostle to be the bishop, in the modern sense, of a city which disputed with Ephesus the right of holding the first rank in Asia Minor.

If we take the second supposition, that St. Polycarp was converted to God when he was grown up, we cannot well suppose him to have been less than about twenty years

of age when his conversion took place, which would make him to have been a hundred and seven years old when he stood before the Proconsul's judgment-seat. If this does not seem to be absurd upon the face of it, the entire narrative of the Martyrdom, the vigour of the Saint, his green and hale old age, forbid the supposition that he could have reached such years as those. Such, however, are the absurdities into which good and learned men, who feel themselves bound to prop up modern theories of Episcopacy, at all cost, are apt to fall. If, as many do, we imagine that Polycarp is the Bishop of Smyrna whom the Apocalypse refers to, under the designation of the angel of that Church, then the chronology of his life would become still more difficult and intricate, not to say altogether paradoxical.

That much-relied-on argument for modern Episcopacy which is derived from a supposed identity between the angels of the seven Apocalyptic Churches, and the bishops of those Churches, will be found upon examination, to derive but little support from very ancient writers. Origen, at least, seems to have known nothing of such a theory. He supposed the Seven Angels to be seven of those holy spirits who stand in the presence of God, seven of those blessed 'bodiless ones,' as the Eastern Church calls them, in her Offices, to whom God commits the care both of individuals, and of Christian communities. 'See,' says the great Alexandrian, writing about the Angels, 'what wonderful care God has of us, that he blames or praises His own Angels in the Book of Revelation, according to our good or evil deeds :'¹ and elsewhere he speaks of them, not as mortal men, but as holy angelic Spirits, presiding over the Churches.

¹ Homilies XI. and XX. in Numeros.

But whilst we are thus compelled to dismiss as untenable, the supposition that Polycarp was made a prelatie Bishop of Smyrna by the last of the Apostles, we may still please ourselves with the thought, to which all antiquity testifies, that in his youth he had been John's disciple. It is possible, that as a little child he had been embraced in the arms of one, who had himself rested upon the Bosom of God incarnate, and as for twenty years of his life he was a contemporary, it is at least probable, that during these twenty years he often sat at the feet of the Apostle of Love, and heard repeated the words of Him, 'Who came down from Heaven,' and yet 'was in heaven,' even whilst He was on earth, by the living human voice of 'one who had gone in and out with the Lord Jesus,' through all the time of his earthly Ministry. And if, as we need not doubt, it was with St. Polycarp, as it was, in his turn with his own disciple, Irenæus, that he remembered what he had seen and heard in his youth far more vividly than the things of yesterday, then was the tradition of the words and the actions of Christ carried on down to the time when the second century was waning fast, by one who had himself heard them from the lips of an Apostle. And long before St. Polycarp went to receive his crown, there were eminent Christians living in their youth, full of the vigour of earnest thought and enquiry, who carried on this lamp of fire, of a living, breathing tradition of the true Catholic faith of Jesus Christ, until they handed it to their successors far on in the third century. It must be remembered that such things as these are incontrovertible facts, and that they are in no wise discredited, as to their *general* truth, because we are not able to settle the exact chronology of such and such events to a year or two, or even within several years. This surely is the best and

truest Apostolic succession : this which appeals as warmly and as freshly to a loving Christian soul to-day, as it did 1700 or 1800 years ago : this surely is of infinitely greater interest and importance to all who would live the life of faith, through union with the God Man, that life which Apostles, and Evangelists, and Martyrs led, than it can be to determine in what particular technical sense, St. Ignatius, or St. Polycarp presided over the Churches of Antioch and Smyrna.¹

The authentic History of St. Polycarp divides itself naturally into two portions—That which embraces the period of his ministry, as Bishop, or President of the Church of Smyrna, and the genuine Acts of his Martyrdom.

Of his earlier years scarcely anything is known with certainty. There are some late Greek traditions, which make a Saint, named Bucolis, the first Bishop of Smyrna, a Saint Stratius, the second. And these were succeeded by several others, before Polycarp came to the Episcopate.² All this only seems to show, how exceedingly uncertain and unreliable those episcopal traditions are. If there be any substratum at all of truth in them, it would seem to be this, that the names which have been preserved are possibly those of some of the ancient, apostolically ordained presbyters of the Church of Smyrna,

¹ I am unwilling to believe that the conscience of evangelical Christendom revolts from the thought of Apostolic Tradition, properly understood and applied. And to disconnect Catholic Tradition from those baseless hierarchical and prelatie theories, which have been associated with it, must be a work most pleasing in the eyes of the Divine Head of the Church.

² Tillemont, *Mémoires*, tome i. p. 329. First ed. of Venice, which is the one I always quote. It has been far too hastily assumed, that even Eusebius says that Polycarp was Bishop of Smyrna, in the later meaning of the word. Cf. H. E. iii. 26, with St. Iren. iii. 3.

and that either in order of seniority, or by choice of their brethren, they were temporary presidents of the Presbyterian College, as we have already seen was undoubtedly the case with the early Bishops of Rome. Thus it is possible, occasionally, to extract a grain or two of gold, from the mass of these otherwise worthless traditions.

The chief event of St. Polycarp's Life which has come down to us, was his visit to Rome. That wonderful Church, whose 'faith was spoken of throughout the whole world,' even as early as the middle of the first century, possessed next to Jerusalem, the holy City, irresistible attractions for every Christian soul. And there were temporary reasons, which made it natural that a lover of Jesus should rather avoid than seek Jerusalem.

After its second destruction and rebuilding under Adrian, it must have been almost enough to drive a Christian to madness, to see a statue of the goddess of impure love set up upon the very spot where Divine Love incarnate had once been crucified.

At Rome there could not be such harrowing sights as this, whatever else there might be to cause a pang.

St. Polycarp then, like almost every other eminent person of the early ages, went to Rome. He went, not only to see that illustrious Christian Community for himself, but to confer with the Roman Clergy as to the proper time for celebrating the Festival of the Resurrection.

A most interesting account of this visit has been preserved by Eusebius from a lost work of Irenæus.

Irenæus was remonstrating with Pope Victor against his threatened harshness, in proposing to excommunicate the churches of Asia Minor, because they did not keep Easter upon the same day as he himself and the Western Church did.

‘The Presbyters,’ he says, ‘who before Soter, presided over the Church in which you are now the first, I mean Anicetus, and Pius, Hyginus, Telesphorus, and Xystus,¹ neither themselves kept Easter on the same day as the Jews, and some Christian Churches, nor did they allow the Roman Christians to observe it thus; yet were they at peace with those who did not observe the same day as themselves, and even when Christians came to them to Rome from other parts, where a different practice prevailed, they suffered them to retain their own use, strikingly as it might bear the semblance of opposition.

‘Never because of such an outward observance as this were any cast out of the Church. So far from this—the presbyters who went before you were in the habit of sending the Eucharist to those Christians from other parishes who observed a different day. Thus when the blessed Polycarp was staying at Rome, in the time of Anicetus, and they had soon come to an agreement about some other matters concerning which they had a slight difference of opinion, even upon this more important point, their disputing soon came to an end. Anicetus was not able to persuade Polycarp to keep a different day from that which he had been always accustomed

¹ Bishop Pearson, who is perhaps the ablest advocate who has yet appeared in defence of the theory of modern Episcopacy, attempts to draw an untenable distinction when he says, that Irenæus only called *departed* bishops presbyters, but never those who were living at the time he wrote. But surely when he says to Pope Victor, to whom he was writing, ‘The presbyters who presided over the Church, of which you are now the leader’ (ἀφηγῶν); ‘The presbyters before you’ (οἱ πρὸ σοῦ πρεσβύτεροι), he must have regarded Victor simply as the chief, or presiding presbyter, for the time being, of the Roman Church. Victor was Bishop of Rome because he was, as Irenæus styles him, the leading presbyter of that Church. Bishop Pearson, *Vindiciæ Ignat.*, part ii., p. 548. Library of Ang. Cath. Theol.

to observe with John, the Disciple of our Lord, and the other Apostles with whom he had lived : neither, on the other hand, could Polycarp prevail upon Anicetus to keep Easter in his way ; for he said he must retain the practice of the presbyters who had been before him. Thus these two were in communion one with another. And in the Church, Anicetus conceded to Polycarp the celebration of the Eucharist, out of the reverence which he had for him. Thus they separated, being at peace one with another. And the whole Church was at peace, though one portion of it observed one day, and another portion a different one.’¹

It may be a trite observation, yet it is one which needs to be repeated in every age, that if church historians had taken pains to preserve more such pictures of mutual love and charity as this, ecclesiastical history would have been at once a pleasanter, and a more profitable study than it has too often proved. For those who are sad and wearied with the investigation of all the strife, and the hatred, and the discord, the pride and arrogance, the worldliness and the baseness, with which page after page of the History of the Church is filled, to come upon such a passage as this is like meeting with a fountain of living water in the midst of a howling wilderness : its recital smites upon the ear with a sound of melody, as sweet as that of the white-robed company of harpers, harping with their harps, that company which follows the Lamb whithersoever He goeth, with whose strains of ineffable harmony, Polycarp, and Irenæus, and Anicetus, and all those blessed peace-lovers and peace-makers, have long since mingled their own voices, as they too joined in the eternal Song of Moses and the Lamb.

¹ Eus. H. E. v. 24.

When we remember what Bishops of Rome have often been, when we think of the names of some of those who have sat in St. Peter's chair, we involuntarily ask the question—Is it indeed true, can it really be, that these gentle, loving, Christ-like Shepherds, to whom Irenæus gives no higher title than that of presbyters who held the first rank in the Church, were the predecessors of an Innocent III., an Alexander VI., a Julius II., a Leo X.?

O Satan! Satan! how thou hast marred the fairest work of God, the Catholic Church! O world! world! how thou hast corrupted the followers of the crucified Lamb!

But the pen of the historian cannot be trusted to linger too long over such scenes as this in the life of Polycarp, lest she should come to loathe altogether other parts of her office.

But it is indeed a pleasure to know that in this one instance of a primitive saint, we have nothing to dwell upon, save scenes of spiritual sweetness and holy love.

Another most pleasant scene in the life of Polycarp has been depicted for us by its eye-witness, Irenæus, and preserved by Eusebius.¹

St. Irenæus is writing to a former friend and fellow-disciple, who had subsequently fallen into the Valentinian heresy, and addresses him thus:

‘These opinions, Florinus, which you broach, are not, speaking mildly, of sound doctrine; they are not consonant with the doctrine of the Church; and they involve those who give heed to them in the greatest impiety. These opinions, not even the heretics, who are without the Church, have ever ventured to proclaim openly. These doctrines, the presbyters who were before

¹ H. E. v. 20.

us,¹ who companied with the Apostles never handed down to thee. When I was yet but a boy in Lower Asia with Polycarp, I saw you greatly distinguishing yourself in the royal palace, and endeavouring to gain his good opinion. For I remember far better what happened then than I do the things of yesterday. For the things which we learn in childhood, growing as it were with the soul's growth, become a part of itself, so that I could tell the very spot where the blessed Polycarp was wont to sit and discourse; I could describe his going out and coming in, his manner of life and his personal appearance, the discourses which he made to the people, what he was used to relate of his familiar intercourse with John, and with the others whom he knew, who had seen the Lord; how he would call to mind their sayings, and the things which he had heard from them concerning Him, about His miracles and His teaching. For even as Polycarp had received from those who were eye-witnesses of the Lord, so he used to relate everything, agreeably to the Scriptures. These were the things which at that time, through the mercy of my God upon me, I heard with alacrity, treasuring them up, not in paper, but in my heart; and these are the things, which by the grace of God, I am ever carefully revolving in my mind. And I can bear my testimony, as in the presence of God, that if that blessed and apostolic presbyter had heard any such things as those which you hold, he would have stopped his ears, and cried out, according to his custom, "O gracious God, to what times hast Thou reserved me, that I should hear such things as this!" And he would

¹ Οἱ πρὸ ἡμῶν πρεσβυτέροι, οἱ καὶ τοῖς Ἀποστόλοις συμφοιτήσαντες. I suppose no one can have any doubt, as to which Irenæus looked upon as the highest and most important title of a Christian minister, bishop or presbyter.

have fled from the place in which he was sitting or standing.'

Certainly, nothing can well be more perfect than the portrait of this Apostolic Presbyter, as he calls him, which St. Irenæus draws in this and the previous extract. He paints him, just as he really was, in his twofold aspect of unbounded charity, in everything which a gentle, loving heart could, in any way bring under the head of non-essentials, and yet the most uncompromising opponent of everything which could, in the very faintest degree, infringe upon the honour of his Divine Master, or trench upon the dignity of the sacred Person of his Lord and Saviour, Jesus Christ.

No one could possibly make a greater mistake than those do, who imagine, that because of their great gentleness, and their infinite charity, there was *nothing* for which these primitive saints and martyrs cared to fight. If any one touched the honour of Emmanuel, God incarnate, God with us, then indeed he touched the very apple of their eye: and so that they might defend that honour, the early Church was ready to shed her blood in torrents, for in such a cause she counted it infinitely more worthless than water.

One more scene in the life of Polycarp before we come to its glorious close. It is again in the Eternal City, the place which had witnessed how he could agree to differ from his fellow-presbyter, Anicetus of Rome. But this is a scene, when he comes into contact with one who taught doctrines which did dishonour to the Lord Jesus.

We are again able to relate the story in the words of his own disciple, St. Irenæus.¹

'Then there was Polycarp, who was not only instructed

¹ Contra Hæres. iii. 3.

by Apostles, and who had conversed with many who had seen the Lord, but who was also appointed by Apostles a bishop in Asia, in the Church in Smyrna,¹ whom we too have seen in our early youth. For he continued until extreme old age; and by a glorious and illustrious martyrdom he departed this life. He always taught those selfsame things, which he had learned of the Apostles, the same also which the Church delivers, and which alone are true. To the same things, all the Churches which are in Asia bear witness, as also do those² who have succeeded Polycarp up to the present time: and Polycarp, we may be certain, is a far surer and more trustworthy witness of the truth than Valentinus and Marcion, and the rest of those who hold false opinions. Polycarp it was, who staying at Rome in the time of Anicetus, brought back many of the before-named heretics to the Church of God, for he always preached, that this one and the same Truth, which is handed down by the Church, is that which she received from the Apostles. And there are³ some who have heard him say, that once, when John, the Lord's disciple, was going to bathe at Ephesus, he saw Kerinthus in the bath, and leapt out

¹ Κατασταθείς εἰς τὴν Ἀσίαν ἐν τῇ ἐν Σμύρνῃ ἐκκλησίᾳ ἐπίσκοπος. The Greek of this passage should be very carefully studied. The *κατασταθείς*, and *ἐπίσκοπος* without the article, are both significant. Speaking here only of the *general* impression which the reading of Eusebius has left upon my mind, I should say that the word *κατασταθείς*, 'appointed,' is far more frequently in use to express the elevation of a bishop to his see, than *χειροτονηθείς*, ordained. This tells strongly against the Episcopate being a distinct *Order*.

² These words of Irenæus are a remarkable incidental confirmation of what his general teaching, in common with that of most of the early Fathers, would lead us to expect, that the true succession of the Church was in the presbyters. Barely twenty years had elapsed between his writing these words, and the death of Polycarp.

³ *Εἰσὶ*, *i.e.* still living when Irenæus wrote.

immediately without bathing, crying out—"Let us flee, lest the bath fall upon us, since Kerinthus, the enemy of the Truth is there."¹ And Polycarp himself, upon one occasion, meeting Marcion, when the latter addressed him, saying—"Recognise me," replied, "I do recognise the first-born of Satan."

'Such was the dread which the apostles and their disciples had of holding communication, even in speech, with any perverters of the truth. And thus it was, that Paul also said—"A man that is an heretic, after the first and second warning reject, knowing that such a one is turned aside, and is a sinner, being self-condemned."'

Little time need be spent in discussing the authenticity of the Acts of St. Polycarp's martyrdom. Very few critics, comparatively speaking, have cared to dispute their credibility. The picture which they present to us of Christian manners, in life and in death, is so sweet and touching in its primitive simplicity, and so few points of controversy are raised by them, that the sternest critics seem as though they could scarcely find in their hearts very seriously to impugn them.

We shall therefore give them nearly at length as they stand in Ruinart.² At the same time, when we speak of

¹ I do not care to enter into the critical and historical difficulties connected with this narrative. All that is fairly certain is, that some eminent, primitive Saint did, in some such way, rebuke a heretical leader, who taught false doctrine concerning the Person of the Saviour. I cannot think of anything which is more the bounden duty of a historian than to rescue such narratives from the miserable perversions, by which it has been sought to make capital out of them, in the interest of particular forms of Church government. The true student of history will see that with such questions they have nothing to do. They concern what is of infinitely vaster importance—the honour of Christ.

² *Acta Sincera*, p. 77; ed. Ratisbon.

these Acts as genuine, it must be distinctly understood, that we refer only to their general substance. There is every reason to suppose that there were many original copies, all differing, to some extent, in detail one from the other. These copies were sent to various churches, far and near. It is plain also, that the earlier transcribers took great liberties in copying. And lastly, there is a considerable discrepancy between the Latin Translations and every extant Greek copy. This points to one of two facts—either that the Latin Translators altered, almost *ad libitum*; or else that the Greek codices from which they made their translations have perished.

It is not without deliberation that I give a translation of these Acts of St. Polycarp. It is surely a more interesting method of writing history, to give in full what must ever be reckoned, after all abatements have been made, documents of the most venerable antiquity, than to abridge them in order to find room for long dissertations, and interminable controversies about the exact year, and month, and day of the week, when certain events took place.

‘The Church of God which is at Smyrna, to the Church of God which dwelleth at Philomelium, and to all the holy Catholic churches,¹ which are in every place, mercy and peace, and the love of God the Father, and of our Lord Jesus Christ, be with you all, and be multiplied.

‘We have written unto you brethren concerning the Martyrs, and concerning blessed Polycarp, who by the

¹ How transparently evident it is from this and numberless other passages in Ante-Nicene times, that the original idea, so to say, of the Catholic Church, was that of a federation of all Christian communities, differing in many respects, but all united in the love of God, and faith in Christ: and that it was not an imposing hierarchical edifice of patriarchs, and primates, bishops, and archbishops, and so on.

sign of faith brought to nought the persecution of the Enemy. For all these things which were done, were foretold by the Lord Himself, according to His Gospel,¹ wherein He hath shown how we ought to follow Him. Forasmuch as He suffered Himself both to be delivered up, and to be nailed to the Cross, that we might be delivered, He willed that we should become followers of Himself. And being the chief in heavenly virtue, He the Just was obedient to the will of the unjust, that thus He might point out the way to them that would follow Him, as a merciful Lord, affording Himself as an example to His servants, that He should not appear unto any man a burdensome Lawgiver. He first endured those things which He bade others to endure. He so informed and taught us all, that we should apply ourselves to save, not ourselves only, but our brethren likewise.

‘Blessed are the sufferings which procure for those that endure them the heavenly Kingdom. And when all those things, such as riches, honours, relations have been despised, there cometh the full consummation of the crown, this indeed is martyrdom.² For what service is so worthy to be rendered by His servants to their gracious Lord as this, seeing that it is manifest that the Lord hath endured more for His servants, than they can endure for Him. Wherefore it behoveth us, who have been instructed, to

¹ The Greek is, ὅτι ἡμῖν ὁ Κύριος ἄνωθεν ἐπέδειξεν τὸ κατὰ τὸ εὐαγγέλιον μαρτύριον. This almost looks like a reference to one of the written Gospels. Cotelerius, however, could not so have understood it, or he would scarcely have rendered it ‘Ut nobis Dominus desuper ostenderet *evangelicum martyrium*.’

² It is most interesting to observe how the ancient authors of these Acts realized what is the true *spirit* of martyrdom, that it is not so much the endurance of bodily pain, but the renunciation of all things for the sake of Christ. They would have been perfectly ready to recognise the great truth, that there can be Martyrs of Christ in all ages.

relate all things with fear, and expose to view the faithful trophies of the devotion of all the soldiers of Christ, even as they were won, to show the love which they had unto God, and the patience with which they endured all things.

‘For who indeed would not be moved to admiration, when he saw that the lash of the dreadful scourge was sweet unto them, that the edge of the sword was grateful, that the roaring of the flames was pleasant? When blood was flowing on either hand, when the inner members of their bodies were exposed to view, so that even the crowd of spectators round about wept at the horror of a sight for which themselves had wished? But not a groan broke from the patient Martyrs, not a sob of pain was extracted from them. For the Lord, who was present to receive the faithful devotion of His servants, not only inflamed them with the love of everlasting life, but also assuaged the violence of their pain. He would not suffer the torments of the body to break the constancy of their mind. The Lord was conversing with them, and showed that He was approving them, and waiting for them.

‘Hence their contempt of their mortal judge, hence their glorious patience. They desired to be unclothed with this earthly light, that they might pass, at the bidding of the Lord, to the bright mansions of eternal salvation. Things that are true they preferred to false, heavenly to earthly, enduring to perishing. Through the destruction lasting for an hour, there was laid up for them a joy which no age can bring to an end.¹

¹ There is a wide divergence in this place between the Greek and Latin codices. The Greek has one remarkable expression, τῶν κοσμικῶν κατεφρόνουν βασάνων, διὰ μιᾶς ὥρας τὴν αἰώνιον κόλασιν ἐξαγοραζόμενοι, which receives a wholly different turn in the Latin, ‘Parabatur enim unius horæ exitio, gaudium,’ &c.

The devil indeed hath had many snares, but the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ was the faithful defence of all His servants. The brave Germanicus, who was devoted to God with all his heart, made the hearts of the unbelievers¹ to quail at the might of his courage. He being delivered up to the wild beasts, when he saw the pity of the Proconsul, who would have persuaded him, at least to have pity upon his youth, spurned him as an enemy, and despised the pardon which the unjust Judge would have persuaded him to accept. Wherefore he himself called the wild beast unto him, for he hasted to be unclothed with the pollution of earth, and to cease from sin. When the multitude saw all this, they were overcome with astonishment, and were intent with admiration at the courage of the Christians, and yet they cried out—‘Let the evil-doers be tortured, let Polycarp be sought for.’

‘Then one Quintus by name, a Phrygian, coming by chance out of his country, having a will prone to suffer, hasted to offer himself of his own accord to the cruel Judge. But his weakness was stronger than his will. For when the wild beasts were let loose upon him, being struck with terror at the sight, he began to refuse what he had asked for, and turning to the devil’s will, to approve of what he had come to destroy. Thus after many solicitations, the Proconsul persuaded him to sacrifice. We ought not therefore to commend those brethren who offer

¹ The Greek Acts are, in this place, of peculiar value: Πολλὰ γὰρ ἐμχανᾶτο κατ’ αὐτῶν ὁ διάβολος, ἀλλὰ χάρις τῷ Θεῷ κατὰ πάντων γὰρ οὐκ ἴσχυσεν. Ὁ γὰρ γενναιότατος Γερμανικὸς ἐπερρώωννεν αὐτῶν τὴν δειλίαν διὰ τῆς ἐν αὐτῷ ὑπομενῆς. The Latin is as translated above. It evidently intends to conceal, as far as possible, the fact, that in this Persecution, several of the Christians, either had apostatized, or were on the very point of apostatizing. I scarcely know another passage, which better illustrates the extreme care with which all these early documents require to be read.

themselves, of their own accord, to the persecutors, but rather those who hiding themselves are found, and persevere unto the end.

‘And this it is which the word of the Gospel confirms, and which examples prove.’

‘Then Polycarp, a man of excellent prudence, though of unflinching purpose, having heard what had happened, sought for a hiding-place. He did not flee away because he was troubled, but he deferred the time. He passed from one place unto another, until at length he sought refuge in a country place, nigh unto the city. There, day and night, he prayed without ceasing, imploring the help of God that he might be strong to suffer. He received a token from God three days before he was taken. He beheld his pillow surrounded with flames.¹ When the holy Elder arose, he said to those that were with him, that he must be burnt with fire.’

‘After that he went by chance into another place; and straightway those who sought him were nigh at hand. Yet could he not be found. Then taking two little children, they beat one of them, who discovered to them where he was hid. How could he lie concealed, whom suffering itself demanded? Then Herod, the Irenarch, hasted to bring him into the circus, as soon as he could, that he might be associated with the Passion of Christ, and that those who betrayed him after the example of Judas might receive the punishment which they deserved. Taking therefore the little child,² they went forth on the

¹ Eusebius says, II. E. iv. 15, that St. Polycarp beheld this vision in his sleep, in other words, that it was a very vivid dream. There is no need to suppose that it was anything more. Ruinart commends Nicephorus for reproving Eusebius for speaking of it as a dream: as if Nicephorus could possibly know anything about the matter.

² The Greek is *παιδίον*. The most natural translation of this would, of course, be a little child, as given above. But the evident intimation

eve of the Sabbath, at the hour of supper, seeking for Polycarp, with a great force of armed horsemen, as though they were about to lay hold, not of a servant of Christ, but of a robber. And the same night they found him, keeping himself close in an upper chamber. And he might have had opportunity to escape: but being now weary, he preferred to show himself, rather than to lie hid, and said—"The will of the Lord be done: so long as it was His will, I put it off, and when He commanded, I also desired." When he saw those who were present, he came down, and spake unto them as the heavenly Spirit of grace gave him utterance.'

'When they wondered at the swiftness of foot of one of so many years and the agile movements of his limbs, he answered them nothing: but commanded a table to be brought, and food to be set before them. And this he did not without a Divine command, since it is written, that we ought to satisfy our enemies with meat and drink. Then he asked of them, that they would permit him to have one hour in which to pray. This when they had granted, immediately for the space of about two hours he continued in prayer without ceasing, so that all who heard him, even his enemies, were astonished with a great astonishment.'

'And this was the manner of his prayer. In his intercession he made mention of all persons whom he had ever known, both good and bad, obscure and honourable, and of the whole Catholic Church¹ throughout the world.

of treachery in Polycarp's own household, leads us to suspect, that possibly the better rendering might be, a young slave, or domestic servant.

¹ I think it very instructive to compare the Latin with the Greek of this passage. The Greek is, as I have given in the text, speaking of the Catholic Church as *one*. The Latin is, 'Et Catholicorum om-

And now at length the hour was come, in which he was to receive the crown of righteousness, which was laid up for him. They set him upon an ass; and when he was come nigh to the city, it being the great Sabbath, there met him Herod, the Irenarch, and his father Nicetas. And they took him up into their chariot, that they might overcome by kindness him whom the fear of punishment could not conquer. And sitting beside him, they spake to him in words full of craft, and said—"What harm is it to say, Lord Cæsar, and to sacrifice?" Thus they spake in words which the devil is wont to suggest. But he, bridling his lips for a little space, cried out at length in anger, that to do this thing, he never could be brought, neither by hunger, nor exile, nor scourge, neither by chains, by fire, nor by sword. Then were they angry, and threw him down out of the chariot. Yet though it was moving so swiftly, was he not hurt: but his buskin fell from his leg; and he went with speed into the arena.'

'And as soon as he had come thither, straightway a voice was heard from heaven, saying—"Polycarp be strong, and play the man." And no one saw the person of him who spake, but divers of us heard the voice.¹ Then he confessed God with all his heart. And the Proconsul, in order that he might compel him to blaspheme, said to him—"Consider at least thine age; if, perchance,

nium, qui per singula loca Ecclesiæ colliguntur.' This certainly points in the direction of the Catholic Church being a grand federation of independent Christian Societies.

¹ Nothing could illustrate better than these words do, the perfectly natural and honest way, in which miraculous stories grew up, in connection with the histories of the early Saints. The voice was doubtless heard, and these simple-hearted Christians, with their fresh and lively faith, not seeing the person who uttered it, immediately concluded that it was a voice from heaven.

thou despisest everything else. How will so great an age as thine be able to endure what even youths might dread? You must swear by Cæsar, and his Fortune: you must repent of your former folly, and say—Away with the impious.”’

‘Then Polycarp, with his lips half-closed, and speaking as though with another’s voice, first drawing a sigh from his very heart, and looking up to heaven to the Majesty on high, said—“Away with the impious.” And when the Judge persisted in urging him, saying, “Swear by the Fortune of Cæsar, curse Christ,” he answered—“Four-score and six years do I serve Him, and never yet hath He done me wrong; how then can I curse my Saviour and my King?”’

‘Moreover he added these words—“Why do you urge me to swear by Cæsar? ¹ Dost thou not know what my

¹ We are indebted to Ruinart, of all people in the world, for showing that the practice of swearing by Cæsar—Polycarp’s refusal of which was one of the reasons why he was burnt alive—was introduced among Christians by the prelates of the Catholic Church, after its establishment by Constantine.

Ζήνων χωρίου Σαγόρου τῆς τῶν τεσσαρεσκαίδεκατικῶν αἰρέσεως, ἐπιγνοὺς τὴν ἀληθῆ πίστιν τῆς ὀρθοδοξίας καὶ παρακαλέσας τὸν ἀγιώτατον ἐπίσκοπον Θεοφάνιον, καὶ εὐλαβέστατον χωρεπίσκοπον Ἰάκωβον, καὶ τὸν εὐλαβέστατον πρεσβύτερον καὶ οἰκονόμον Χαρίσιον, προσῆλθον τῇ ἀγιωτάτῃ καθολικῇ ἐκκλησίᾳ . . . ἀναθεματίζων καὶ τοὺς μὴ ποιοῦντας τὴν ἀγίαν ἡμέραν τοῦ πάσχα καθὼς ἡ ἀγία καθολικὴ ποιεῖ ἐκκλησία· ἐξομνύμενος τὴν ἀγίαν καὶ ὁμοούσιον Τριάδα, καὶ εὐσέβειαν καὶ νίκην τῶν δεσποτῶν τῆς οἰκουμένης Φλαυίου Θεοδοσίου καὶ Φλαυίου Οὐαλεντινιάνου τῶν αἰωνίων Αὐγούστων, κ.τ.λ. This was done in the *Œcumenical Council of Ephesus*. Ruinart. *Acta Sincera*, p. 93.

Let any one compare all this bitter cursing of the poor, harmless Quartodecimans, with the loving intercourse of the Quartodeciman Polycarp, and the Anti-Quartodeciman Pope Anicetus, related from Irenæus, a few pages back, and I think, he will have considerable difficulty in recognizing the identity of the martyr Church of the three first centuries, with the subsequent prelatic Church.

There was an identity without doubt, but it requires much patient

profession is? Openly I proclaim myself a Christian : and the more thou art angry with me for this my profession, the more will I rejoice. But if thou wouldst know the reason of the Law which I obey, appoint me a time ; and I will explain all things unto thee.”

‘ The Proconsul answered—“ Satisfy the Public.” ’¹

Polycarp said—‘ Thee may I satisfy in all things which are lawful for me, for we are commanded to obey the powers which be ordained of God : but the people I must not satisfy, neither obey them.’ The Proconsul said—‘ I have savage wild beasts : to them will I give thee, that they may tear thee limb from limb.’ He answered, ‘ Let the bloodthirsty madness of the lions rage against me, and whatsoever torment my harsh Judge can invent, yet will I glory in tribulations, I will leap for joy when I am wounded, I will estimate my merits by the weight of my pains. The more we suffer, so much the greater our rewards. From things that are lowly, we advance to those which are highly exalted.’

The Proconsul replied—‘ If in your presumption, you despise the teeth of the wild beasts, I will cause you to be burnt alive.’

care to trace the lines of resemblance, they are so very few, and so very faint. These episcopally exacted oaths, and episcopally inflicted curses seem to have gone hand in hand. What confidence can, or ought Christendom to have in a so-called Œcumenical Council, when the bishops who composed it, could, in a solemn oath, place the names of the ‘ eternal Augustuses,’ as they call them, in such shocking juxtaposition with the awful Name of the most holy, and ever-blessed Trinity?

¹ ‘ Satisfac populo.’ Until I read the Latin Acts of St. Polycarp, I was not aware that this expression, which is so frequently, and so becomingly found on the lips of prelates, and other dignitaries of the Anglican Church, had been originally borrowed from the Roman Proconsul, who was annoyed with Polycarp, for refusing to say ‘ Lord Cæsar,’ and swear by the fortune of the Emperor.

Then said Polycarp—‘ You threaten me with fire which burns fiercely for a single hour, and then is quenched : but you know not the judgment to come, and the everlasting torments of the eternal fire which await the wicked. But why do we waste our time in useless words ? Do unto me as seemeth thee good : I am ready to suffer what you decree.’

‘ While Polycarp thus by his answers bravely played the man, such celestial splendour shone in his countenance, that even the Proconsul stood in awe. And the voice of the herald was heard in the arena, proclaiming thrice—“ Polycarp confesses that he has always been a Christian.” Then the whole multitude of the people of the Jews, and of the Gentiles, which dwell at Smyrna, was moved with anger, and cried out—“ This is the Teacher of Asia, the Father of the Christians, the Destroyer of our gods, who teaches that sacrifice ought not to be offered, and that the images of the deities ought not to be worshipped.”’

‘ Then they besought Philip, the Asiarch, that he would let loose a lion upon him : but he answered, that it was not lawful to do so, for the time of the Shows was now expired. Then it pleased them all, with one consent, that Polycarp should be burnt alive. For that must needs happen which he had foretold. Therefore, praying to Almighty God, and turning his venerable face towards his own beloved, he said—“ Ye see that that is to be my Passion, of which I was forewarned.” Then the people, but especially the Jews, flew to the baths, and the workshops, in search of wood and faggots, to feed the flames. And when the fire was kindled, Polycarp unloosed his girdle, and laid aside his garment. Then he began to undo the thong of his sandal, a thing he had never done before, because the faithful had always striven to perform

for him such offices, in token of affection. Thus, as everything was ready for his burning, when they were about to bind him, as is wont to be done, he said—“Suffer me to remain as I am: for He who hath given me to will, will give me strength likewise, and will enable my will to endure the burning flame.” Therefore no one bound him with iron; but with his hands tied behind him, like a chosen ram, taken out of a mighty flock, he was presented to God, an acceptable burnt-offering.’

‘And looking up to heaven, he said—“O Lord God Almighty, the Father of Thy well-beloved and blessed Son, Jesus Christ, through Whom we have received the knowledge of Thee, O God of angels and powers, and of every creature, and of all the race of the just, who live in Thy sight, I bless Thee, for that Thou hast vouchsafed to bring me to this day and this hour, that I may have a portion in the number of Thy Martyrs, and in the cup of Thy Christ, for the resurrection unto eternal life, both of body and soul, in the incorruption of the Holy Ghost: wherein may I find a place this day before Thee, as it were a fat and acceptable sacrifice, even as Thou hast afore prepared, and manifested, and fulfilled, Thou Who art the true God, Which cannot lie. Wherefore also I praise Thee for all things, I bless Thee, I glorify Thee, together with Thy heavenly and eternal, Thy well-beloved Child, Jesus Christ, with Whom be glory, to Thee, and the Holy Spirit, now and for the ages to come. Amen.”’

‘And as soon as he had uttered the “Amen,” at the completion of his prayer, they lit up the fire, and a vast sheet of flame shot forth; and we to whom it was given to see, beheld a marvellous wonder. For some of us kept nigh at hand, that we might tell unto the

rest, the things which were done. For the fire making the appearance of an arch, like unto the sail of a ship when it is spread out, and filled with the wind, encompassed the body of the Martyr round about ; and he was in the midst of it, not like flesh that was being burnt, but as bread that was baked, or like gold and silver being purified in a furnace : and we perceived a pleasant smell, as though frankincense, or some other precious spices were being wafted towards us.’¹

‘ When therefore the ungodly perceived that his body could not be consumed, they bade the executioner approach, and thrust in his dagger to the hilt. And when he had this done, there came forth from his left side, so great a quantity of blood as to quench the fire. And all the people marvelled that there should be so great a difference between the unbelievers and the elect. For one of the elect was the most admirable Martyr Polycarp, who even in our own time was an apostolic teacher, and a prophet, and a bishop of the Catholic Church in Smyrna. And every word which proceeded out of his mouth hath been fulfilled, and shall be fulfilled.’

‘ But the malicious and deceitful and wicked adversary of the race of the just, beholding the greatness of his testimony, and his conversation from the beginning without reproach, and that now he had been crowned with

¹ This regarding events, explicable by natural causes, as due to supernatural agency, is common in all ages with simple-hearted people. The annals of the Martyr Church of Madagascar, a noble Church, won for Christ in our own generation, by the efforts of Congregationalist Christians, abound with similar instances. This Martyr Church of Madagascar seems to have reproduced very exactly in the nineteenth century the lineaments of the Martyr Church of the three first centuries, before hierarchical, and prelate ideas corrupted it. May it have a happier fate.

the crown of immortality, and that he had borne away the unspeakable prize, took heed that we should not obtain even his remains, yea though many sought earnestly to possess them, and to have a portion of his holy flesh. The devil therefore put it into the heart of Nicetas, the father of Herod, and the brother of Alce, to go in unto the Governor, to ask that his body might not be given to burial. "For," said he, "leaving the Crucified, they will begin to worship this fellow." And this he said at the suggestion of the Jews, who also were on the watch against us, when we would have taken the body from the fire. For they were ignorant that we never could forsake Christ, Who suffered for the salvation of all that shall be saved in all the world, the Spotless on behalf of sinners: neither can we worship any other. For Him indeed, being the Son of God, we worship, but the Martyrs, as disciples and imitators of the Lord, we rightly love, for the sake of the inexpressible affection which they bear to their Master and their King; with whom, may we have communion, as their fellow-disciples.'

'When the centurion saw the striving of the Jews, he placed the body in the midst of the fire, and consumed it. Afterwards we took up what remained of his bones, as more precious than costly gems, and more worthy than refined gold; and we laid them up, where we come together. There may the Lord grant unto us to celebrate the birthday of his martyrdom, with joy and gladness, both for a memorial of those who have fought the good fight, and for the training and preparation of fresh recruits.

'Such is the account of blessed Polycarp, who suffered martyrdom at Smyrna, together with twelve others, who came from Philadelphia. But he alone is made mention

of rather than they, because his fame is spoken of, even by the heathen in every place.

‘You have often asked us to relate everything which happened concerning the blessed Polycarp, and this we have now done.

‘This martyrdom took place on the 25th of April, on the great Sabbath, Statius Quadratus being the Proconsul.

‘Do ye, by your letters, make known everywhere what we have related unto you, that in every place the Lord may be blessed, by the election of His faithful servants.’

It is a valuable testimony to the general faithfulness of these Acts, that there are even still extant so many copies and versions, all differing in detail, but preserving a substantial agreement as to the main facts.

The quotations which Eusebius gives from them are an additional proof of this. And he mentions something as appended to his copy, which is now lost, the excision of which shows, that there was no want of will to tamper with them in later times. He says that in the same written account which contained the martyrdom of Polycarp, was included the record of several other martyrdoms, which took place at Smyrna at the same time.¹ Amongst them was that of Metrodorus, who appears to have been a presbyter amongst the Marcionites, who also suffered by fire.

It is at once pleasing and unexpected to find the original Acts recognising the death of a presbyter of what was even then called a fearful heresy, as a true martyrdom for the sake of Christ. This makes us hope,

¹ Ἐν τῇ αὐτῇ δὲ περὶ αὐτοῦ γραφῇ καὶ ἄλλα μαρτύρια συνῆπτο κατὰ τὴν αὐτὴν Σμύρναν πεπραγμένα ὑπὸ τὴν αὐτὴν περίοδον τοῦ χρόνου τῆς τοῦ Πολυκάρπου μαρτυρίας· μεθ' ὧν καὶ Μητροδωρος τῆς κατὰ Μαρκίωνα πλάνης πρεσβύτερος δὲ εἶναι δοκῶν, πυρὶ παραδόθεις ἀιχρήται.—H. E. iv. 15.

that the dreadful things which are found in the writings of almost all the early Fathers, respecting the doctrines and practices of the Gnostic sects, are not to be taken as literally and strictly applying to every individual member of them. It is possible that St. Irenæus and Tertullian may have sometimes done, what has been the distinguishing mark of all theological controversy, since polemics began, —have drawn logical, or apparently logical conclusions from certain statements, and charged these conclusions upon the authors of the statements, though the authors themselves would have vehemently protested that this was not their meaning. There is a somewhat neglected passage of Eusebius, in which it is stated, that the members of the various offshoots from the Marcionite heresy were called Christians.¹ And here, at any rate, we have the undoubted fact, that in the original Acts of St. Polycarp, a Marcionite priest is honoured as a Christian Martyr.

¹ Eusebius is quoting (H. E. iv. 12) a lost work of St. Justin M. *Καὶ πάντες οἱ ἀπὸ τούτων ὠρμημένοι, ὡς ἔφαμεν, Χριστιανοὶ καλοῦνται: ὃν τρόπον καὶ οὐ κοιῶν ὄντων δογμάτων τοῖς φιλοσόφοις, τὸ ἐπικαλούμενον ὄνομα τῆς φιλοσοφίας κοινόν ἐστιν.*

Dr. Burton, in the Index to his Edition of Eusebius, gives this remark of Justin's, as applicable to all the early heretics. But this is an inadvertence.

CHAPTER XIII.

SAINT POLYCARP'S EPISTLE TO THE PHILIPPIANS.

THE Epistle of Polycarp to the Philippians raises, or involves some interesting questions. It is so simple and beautiful in its language, and breathes so entirely the spirit of pure, loving Christianity, that however needful it may be, in the interests of truth, to criticise it, to do so is far from pleasant.

But the more we bury ourselves, as it were, in these Catacombs of the remote annals of the Christian Church, ever more and more are we unwillingly compelled to confess to ourselves, that we are breathing an atmosphere which is redolent of forgery and falsification. The truth seems to be, and it must be admitted sooner or later, and better soon than late, that until the rise of a certain well known critical School in Germany, about a century ago, the principle, that there is anything decidedly wrong, in the alteration of historical documents, or ancient writings, never seems to have been acknowledged as an elementary moral principle in the world of letters. There have, of course, always been individual writers, who have been far too high minded to tamper with the works of their predecessors, but this has been the result of their own accidental honesty, as it were ; not because a contrary practice was denounced by everyone, as disgraceful and dishonourable.

And this is not all, the further back we go, the more common become the practices of literary forgery and

alteration, until at length we reach a point, where everything is in false proportion and perspective, a point, where according to the public opinion of the age, that public opinion to which few indeed ever rise superior, to alter an author's works, or to forge writings in his name, was not only pardonable, but an act of the highest merit.

The external evidence in favour of the genuineness of this Epistle of Polycarp is very slender indeed. The only really early testimony is that of St. Irenæus: and he merely says, that 'he wrote a very excellent ¹ Epistle to the Philadelphians. From it those who are anxious about their salvation, may be able to learn the nature of his faith, and his preaching of the truth.'

These remarks of Irenæus are indefinite enough, and unfortunately he does not give any extracts from the Epistle, which he recognized as that of the Master of his youth. It is only when, after the long gap of a century and a half, we come to Eusebius himself, that we find a few extracts, which agree in the main with our present copies.²

And even these extracts, compared with another passage of Eusebius, in which Irenæus speaks of Polycarp, as the author of several Epistles,³ lead to questions which are much more easily asked than answered. In truth this Epistle of St. Polycarp, beautiful as it is, tends far more in the direction of disturbing, than of settling the Canon of the New Testament Scriptures. And it is the very fact of its venerable antiquity, in the main, in spite of a few suspected interpolations, which makes its disturbing influence of a serious character.

¹ Eus. H. E. iii. "Εστί δὲ καὶ ἐπιστολὴ . . . ἱκανωτάτη. This word *ἱκ* is quite untranslatable by any *single* English word.

² H. E. iii. 36.

³ *Ibid.* v. 20.

In addressing the Philippians, towards the commencement of his Letter, St. Polycarp speaks of St. Paul, as teaching them accurately concerning the Truth, when he was present in person among them, and as writing Epistles to them when he was absent.¹ It is impossible to avoid asking, what were these Epistles of Paul to the Philippians? Was that Epistle which the Church has long possessed, only one of such Letters? Or is it a conglomeration of all of them thrown into one? Is there any connection between these Epistles of St. Paul to the Philippians, which were, we may suppose, very short, and that remarkable statement of Origen, of which sufficient notice has never been taken in any history of the New Testament Canon, when, speaking of the Apostle of the Gentiles, he says, that 'he was an able minister of the new Covenant, not of the letter, but of the spirit, who fully preached the Gospel from Jerusalem as far as Illyricum, and that he did not write to all the Churches which he instructed, and even to those to which he did write, he sent a few lines?'² It seems impossible to think that a *few lines* could be a correct description of St. Paul's Epistle to the Romans, as we now have it, or of the First, or Second Epistle to the Corinthians. And must we, in the failure of any satisfactory explanation, be driven to the unpleasant suspicion, that even St. Paul's Epistles have been largely interpolated?

These are all questions which cannot be answered off-hand, one way, or another: they will not meet with a solution to-day or to-morrow: but, it may be, centuries hence. And in the meanwhile, we may be very sure, that modern enquiry will not finally rest content with such

¹ Ὃς καὶ ἀπὸν ὑμῶν ἔγραψεν ἐπιστολάς. St. Polycarpi Epist. c. 3.

² Eus. H. E. vi. 25. Παῦλος . . . οὐδὲ πάσαις ἔγραψεν αἷς ἐδίδαζεν ἐκκλησίαις· ἀλλὰ καὶ αἷς ἔγραψεν, ὀλίγους στίχους ἐπέστειλη.

criticism as that which says, that when St. Polycarp speaks of St. Paul's writing *Epistles* to the Philippians, he really meant *an Epistle*.¹

The next point for consideration is this—that if we are driven to the conclusion that the Epistles of St. Ignatius, and the Epistle of St. Polycarp have been interpolated, with what object were the interpolations made? This enquiry leads to some rather remarkable results. Granting interpolation, we shall find, that whilst it has taken place in the Ignatian Epistles, in order to gain acceptance for peculiar views concerning the Christian Ministry, these Epistles are almost entirely free from the suspicion of later insertions of passages taken from the Canon of the New Testament. On the other hand, the Epistle of Polycarp is absolutely free from any passages which advocate, or support what may be called the Episcopal theory of Church government; but at the same time, it quotes the New Testament Scriptures in a way which, most unquestionably, is done in no other genuine writing of the first half of the second century. Indeed, the case might be put in a far stronger manner. This then would point to the probability, that these suspected interpolations were made by different hands, and in different interests.

We have already seen how the Ignatian Epistles press home in every possible way, in season, and out of season, the necessity of obedience to the Hierarchy, as a primary duty, for all professing Christians. The Epistle of Polycarp to the Philippians says nothing, whatever be the cause, about the Bishop of Philippi, but lays down general rules for the guidance, first of deacons, then of presbyters. The author seems to have coincided exactly with the

¹ Cotelarius, cited by Hefele.

Apostle Paul in his view of the Christian Ministry. And this being the case, and the address of St. Paul to the same Church, in which he makes mention of the *bishops*¹ and deacons of Philippi, being extant and well known, no interpolator was found hardy enough to tamper with Polycarp's Epistle, in this particular point. And whatever theory we may frame to account for it, the fact is certain, that there is a divergence between the Ignatian Epistles and that of Polycarp. The latter says simply—'We ought to abstain from all the works of the flesh, and be subject to the *presbyters* and deacons as to God and Christ.' Hefele's remark upon this can do nothing but create a smile—'He does not make mention of the Bishop, because his modesty rendered him unwilling to exhort him.'² It is scarcely possible to conceive how anything short of a species of mental disease, superinduced by dwelling upon the modern view of Episcopacy, as the crucial article of a standing, or falling Church, could have led a learned and able man to pen such a sentence as this. Polycarp was not exhorting bishops; he was exhorting the *people* of Philippi, to be obedient to their presbyters. But even if he had been exhorting ministers to be diligent in the performance of their special duties, that surely was a thing in which those ancient, saintly presbyter-bishops never allowed their modesty to stand in the way, and prevent their exhorting, or even, if need were, of reproving their fellow bishops.

It would, we may imagine, be absolutely impossible for any person, except he were endeavouring to support a

¹ That the bishops in Philipp. i. 1, were bishops with St. Paul, not at Philippi, is surely an exploded fallacy. I say this, lest I should be thought to have overlooked the theory.

² Polycarpus Episcopi non facit mentionem, quippe qui verecundia impeditus eum nollet cohortari.

foregone conclusion, to avoid seeing, that when St. Paul addresses the *bishops* of the Philippian Church, and when St. Polycarp exhorts the *presbyters* of the same Church, both the Apostle and the Apostolic Father *meant one and the same order of ministers*. And it is a natural deduction from this, that when Polycarp wrote, there had no such thing been known at Philippi, as for one man, who was considered to belong to a distinct and superior Order, to rule over the whole Christian community, by Divine, or even by Ecclesiastical appointment. There is just a bare possibility, that there may have been, in the first half of the second century, in the Philippian Church, a presbyter who was chosen from among his brethren to be a temporary Chairman, or administrative head. But looking at all the facts and circumstances of the case, even this is most improbable.

The statement which has been often repeated, that Polycarp probably collected the Seven Epistles of Ignatius, appears to be founded upon some words of the former in his own Epistle.

‘Ye wrote unto me,’ he says, ‘both ye yourselves and Ignatius, that if anyone were going into Syria, he should convey your Letters thither. I will take care that this is done, if I find a fit opportunity, either by myself: or else the messenger whom I may send, shall be your messenger likewise. The Epistles of Ignatius, which were sent by him to us, and all the others, which we had by us, we have sent on to you, as ye desired. They are appended to this Epistle.¹ Ye will derive great profit from their perusal. They abound in faith and patience and all edification pertaining to our Lord.’

¹ Αἴτινες ὑποτεταγμένοι εἰσὶ τῇ ἐπιστολῇ ταύτῃ. Epist. ad Philipp. c. 13.

‘And concerning Ignatius himself and those who are with him, signify to us what ye know with any certainty.’

All this is at once interesting and natural.

It is another instance of what we find so many traces in very early times, the frequency of epistolary communication between the various Churches of God, dispersed throughout the Roman world, from the banks of the Rhone to the banks of the Tigris.

The incalculably immense number of these Letters, which there must have been, easily accounts for any quantity of forged Epistles, and for any amount of interpolation in such as were genuine.

Another reflection presents itself to a thoughtful mind. Could those letters of St. Ignatius, which St. Polycarp tells the Philippians he sent them, appended to his own, be the Epistles of the Antiochene Patriarch in the form in which we now possess them, even according to the shorter Greek Recension? Is it at all probable that they extended to so great a length? It does indeed seem more natural to suppose, that the Epistles were originally like Letters in the customary sense of the word, and did not partake so much of the nature of Treatises, as those we now possess.

The present seems to be an age in which, more than in any previous one, discoveries are being constantly made of documents, which throw light upon the history of the Primitive Church. Few discoveries would be more important, or interesting than the finding of a copy of the original Epistle of Polycarp, with the Ignatian Epistles appended. Is it too much to hope that such good fortune may yet be in store? If such a discovery should take place, it is probable that the Ignatian Epistles will be found, minus that to the Romans. This last, we may suppose, would be written and sent off at once, to be

conveyed to the capital by some of the brethren who were proceeding thither, and were likely to reach the great Metropolis before Ignatius himself. It is indeed not at all unlikely, that it might be despatched from Asia Minor without a copy being taken. If this were so, the difficulty which an interpolator in the East would have in procuring a copy may, perhaps, account for what has been rather perplexing to those critics who believe that these Letters have been interpolated to advance the interests of the Episcopal form of Church government, how, namely, it has happened that the Epistle to the Romans stands alone, in saying nothing about bishops. All but this might be accessible to any one who was desirous of tampering with them.

Doubts as to the authenticity of Polycarp's own Epistle to the Philippians have been raised, in consequence of his asking them for news of Ignatius. But I believe a candid consideration of the sequence of events will show that such doubts are unfounded. A perfectly natural sequence would seem to be as follows.

After Ignatius' stay at Smyrna, he went on in the company of his guard of soldiers to Troas. Here he remained a short time, and wrote to Polycarp and others, informing them of his state.

From Troas he crossed over to Philippi, where during his probably brief stay, he would be visited and attended with all loving care by the Christians of that place, and it is not at all improbable that from thence also he would address a short letter to Polycarp. Then he would be taken rapidly across the country, by the Egnatian Way, to the coast of the Adriatic, so that after his leaving Philippi, Polycarp would have received no further tidings of him : and feeling anxious to hear something, and knowing that Philippi was on the route by which he had gone on to

Rome, he very naturally wrote to the Philippians to let him know, as soon as possible, the last accounts which they had received, either of, or from him.

But whilst all this is clear and straightforward enough, and is very fair evidence that the original authentic Epistle of Polycarp was written contemporaneously with St. Ignatius' Martyrdom, that is to say, somewhere about A.D. 115, it must not be forgotten, that the character of its quotations from the New Testament shows, that it was subsequently, to some extent, interpolated. When that interpolation took place it is impossible to tell exactly; but we may fairly conjecture that it was very shortly after St. Polycarp's own Martyrdom, or at any rate before the close of the second century.

CHAPTER XIV.

SAINT HERMAS—HIS LIFE—LITERARY REMAINS—IMMENSE INFLUENCE UPON THE DOCTRINE OF THE CHURCH WITH REGARD TO REPENTANCE—FIERCE INTERNAL STRUGGLES IN THE CATHOLIC CHURCH.

IN Saint Hermas we come to the last of those venerable writers, who have usually been denominated the Apostolic Fathers—writers, whose works it would be impossible to prove were regarded by their immediate successors in any different light from those other works, which have since been called the Canonical Scriptures of the New Testament. There is not a single test which could be applied to the latter for a generation or two after their first publication, in which we should find the former to fail. This alone is sufficient to show the necessity for some modification of popular views and ideas upon the grave question of Inspiration, using the word in its application to Holy Scripture.

Most persons in the present day would feel, and feel rightly, that the *Pastor* of Hermas is all but infinitely inferior to such works as the Epistle to the Hebrews, or the Revelation of St. John the Divine. But if people would reason without prejudice, they would see that, on the one hand, if, not external evidence, but a general feeling of inferiority, or superiority with regard to such and such Books were allowed to determine their admission, or non-admission into the Canon, it would be a great chance if the Epistle of St. James were not ex-

cluded, and the Epistle of St. Clement of Rome admitted : and on the other hand, the contemporary history of our own times shows us, that if any wise and learned men set themselves to give an answer to the question—What is Holy Scripture? by saying that it must be determined by the voice of the Great Congregation, there is a howl of rage and indignation which resounds from one end of Christendom to the other. And, after all, the great question remains, and seems likely, for the present, to remain unanswered. It would almost appear as if vast multitudes of persons, holding the traditionary ideas about Christianity, were unwilling to say themselves in plain and intelligible words, what they mean by inspired Scripture, and were also unwilling that any answer should be given by others to this vitally important question.

What then must be done? If the orthodox would only see that in such an age of intellectual activity as this, the tide both of honest doubt and absolute scepticism is rising ever higher and higher; and that this, as well as some other questions, must be answered sooner or later; and if they would only either fairly face such questions or allow others to face them, the signs of the times would be more hopeful than they are.

I would not presume to give an answer to such questions myself. Indeed, it would be stepping beyond the province of the historian to attempt to do so, at least to any extent.

It is rather his office to state and weigh evidence with candour and impartiality. Still he may be permitted gently to protest against a spirit which refuses, or is unable to solve great and difficult problems itself, and yet is angry that any one else should make the attempt.

The history of Hermas is entirely literary, at least so far as this, that nothing whatever is known about him,

except what can be collected from his famous work, the *Pastor*, or the *Shepherd*. And it is scarcely necessary to observe that the few details of personal history which are found in the *Pastor*, need not be applied to the author of the Book ; though it is a probable enough supposition, that they do so apply. These scanty particulars will be given further on.

By far the most important question connected with this ancient Father is, when did he flourish? Two theories have been put forward.

1. That he is the Hermas mentioned by St. Paul in the 16th chapter of his Epistle to the Romans ; and that he must therefore have written his work at some period between the middle and the close of the first century. For this theory there does not appear to be one tittle of what may be called historical evidence. It affords another of those all but innumerable cases in the annals of the Primitive Church, where succeeding ages have built up a pyramid upon its own apex. The chief writers of the second century who speak of the *Pastor* of Hermas are Irenæus, Clement of Alexandria, and Tertullian. They none of them give any account of Hermas himself. And even if they did, and if they had said that he was the Hermas mentioned by St. Paul, still, as these three writers came about the end of the second century, their testimony, though worthy of respectful attention, would not have been absolutely decisive about an author who flourished a century before they did. But it is not necessary to take such a possibility into consideration.

As a matter of fact, Origen, who, for practical purposes, may be placed about the middle of the third century, or a few years later, is the earliest writer who connects the Hermas of the *Pastor* with the Hermas of the Epistle to the Romans. And this he does, not by stating

it as a fact, but as a probable, or rather a possible conjecture. Origen's words must be given, that it may be seen how little he actually does say, and for what an imposing superincumbent structure he has been made responsible. Commenting upon St. Paul's words—'Salute Hermas,' he adds—'I suppose that this Hermas is the Author of the Work called the *Pastor*, a book which appears to me most profitable, and in my opinion divinely inspired.'¹

The next writer, who at all supports this theory of the authorship of the *Pastor*, is Eusebius of Cæsarea. He merely says—'Since the Apostle, at the conclusion of his Epistle to the Romans, makes mention among others of Hermas, they say, that he is the writer of the book called the *Pastor*.'² If we were able to question Eusebius as to what he meant by 'they say,' he would most probably reply, that it was a conjecture of the great Origen. It is unnecessary to cite St. Jerome; as it is evident that, unless he were quoting some authority more ancient than himself, which is not the case, he could know no more about the actual fact than we do.

2. Dismissing then the authorship of the *Pastor* by the Hermas of the Epistle to the Romans as an unsupported conjecture of Origen's, we come upon much firmer ground in a statement found in what is called the Muratorian fragment, a venerable relic of some unknown author, dating back to perhaps A.D. 180. This statement is to the effect—'that the Book called the *Pastor* was written not very long ago, but in our own times, in the city of Rome, by Hermas, a Brother of Pius, the bishop, who then occupied the Roman See. And it is well worthy of

¹ 'Puto tamen, quod Hermas iste sit scriptor libelli illius, qui *Pastor* appellatur, quæ Scriptura valde mihi utilis videtur, et ut puto divinitus inspirata.'

² II. E. iii. 3.

being read : but it may not be published in the Church to the people, either as included in the number of the Prophets, which is completed, nor yet among the Apostles in the end of the times.' ¹ This, at least, is direct evidence ; and, for that very reason, wholly different from the remark of Origen. The evidence of the Muratorian fragment may not be worth very much. If however it be rejected, we must remember that there is absolutely nothing to fall back upon. And our external knowledge of the Writer of the *Pastor* will be simply a blank. It has been too hastily taken for granted by most critics, that the authorship lies between the Hermas of the Epistle to the Romans, and the Brother of Pope Pius the 1st, in about the middle of the second century. But this is not the case. As we have already stated, there is no *external* historical evidence of any kind for the elder Hermas. In addition to what is said by the Muratorian fragment, there is some slight external evidence, tending in the same direction. But it is not necessary to enter into it. It only answers to the weakest links of a chain.

The internal evidence, which, in a case of this kind, can never be allowed the highest value, is pretty evenly balanced in favour of either Hermas. Against the later of the name is the apparent fact, that the Book is allowed by everybody to have been originally written in Greek, and that the Brother of Pius was, in all probability, a Latin in race and language. Admitting the full force of

¹ Some parts of the original Latin are so obscure, and will admit of such various meanings, that it is best to give it. 'Pastorem vero nuperrime temporibus nostris in urbe Roma Herma conscripsit, sedente cathedra urbis Romæ ecclesiæ Pio episcopo, fratre ejus. Et ideo legi eum quidem oportet, sed publicari vero in ecclesia populo, neque inter prophetas completos numero, neque inter Apostolos in finem temporum potest.'

this, critics ought to have remembered, what for the most part they have forgotten, that disproving the authorship of the later *Hermas* does not advance them a single step towards proving that of the earlier.

Fortunately the determination of the question is of no great importance; and we may dismiss it after this brief summary of such evidence as we possess.

A much more important consideration is, in what estimation was the work held by the Primitive Church? What was the rank which it occupied? Upon these points we have a mass of information.

In the first place, St. Irenæus is supposed¹ to refer to the *Pastor*, when he says—‘Well then hath the Scripture spoken, which saith, “First of all, believe that there is one God, who has made and perfected all things, and created them out of nothing.”’² If this can be trusted to be, in its present form, really a citation by St. Irenæus of a passage in the *Pastor*, it must be conceded that he looked upon the writings of *Hermas* as a part of Scripture. But there is reason for looking upon the passage as corrupt, or, at least, as unreliable.

Clement of Alexandria quotes the writings of *Hermas*,

¹ I say supposed, because I have never been able quite to satisfy myself that Irenæus is quoting this work, in the words—‘Καλῶς οὖν εἶπεν ἡ γραφὴ ἢ λέγουσα· πρῶτον πάντων πίστευσον ὅτι εἷς ἐστιν ὁ Θεὸς ὁ τὰ πάντα κτίσας καὶ καταρτίσας.’ This is the original Greek, preserved by St. Athanasius. Remembering the verbally inaccurate way in which the early Fathers frequently make citations, it appears to me quite possible that Irenæus was only referring to such passages as Deut. vi. 4.

After careful consideration, and a comparison of the various Greek and Latin forms of this passage, I have no hesitation in saying that I feel convinced it has been tampered with, but when, where, or by whom, it is very difficult to say. It is sufficient to observe that it was employed by both sides in the Arian controversy.

² *Pastor*: Mand. I. lib. ii.

certainly five, or six times.¹ In one instance, he prefaces his quotation with—‘as saith the *Pastor*, the Angel of repentance, to Hermas.’ All the others are prefaced by—‘as saith the *Pastor*.’ This would scarcely show what was St. Clement’s opinion, one way or the other, as to the work of Hermas being looked upon, as what is now called Holy Scripture. Viewed in this particular connection, the most important citation is in the Sixth Book of the *Stromata*. Here he uses a passage of the *Pastor* to support his favourite doctrine of preaching the Gospel to those of the dead, who had not had an opportunity of hearing it in this life. He had already appealed to works of St. Peter, now considered apocryphal, as his scriptural authority for this doctrine. He draws further support from a quotation of St. Hermas. ‘It is well said in the *Pastor*—“Now there went down certain persons into the water: these indeed went down alive, and alive they came up: but those who before had fallen asleep, went down dead, and came up alive!” ‘And indeed the Gospel says, that many bodies of the saints which slept arose, manifesting that they were translated to a better position.’ The original passage in Hermas is very obscure, but taken as a whole, it appears to refer to Baptism. And the latter portion may have a connection with that remarkable question of St. Paul—‘What shall they do, who are baptized on behalf of the dead, if the dead rise not at all? Why are they then baptized on behalf of the dead?’² A passage which has been commented upon times innumerable, but never yet explained. The general tendency of the teaching of Clement would be to expound such passages, both in the *Pastor* and St. Paul, of

¹ Strom. l. i. c. 17; ii. cc. 12 and 13. There are two, or three quotations in these chapters—iv. c. 9, and vi. c. 6.

² 1 Cor. xv. 29. On behalf of, ὑπέρ.

preaching, rather than of sacramental acts. These last he does not ignore, or undervalue, but they occupy a subordinate place in his religious system. This is not the place to enter into Clement's theory of preaching to the dead, further than to show how he, a writer of the second century, thought that his views were the same as those of St. Peter the Apostle, and the author of the *Pastor*.

With regard to the authority which St. Clement would assign to the *Pastor*, as a writing which might be quoted for the confirmation of doctrine, my belief is, that those who know his system best, will not differ very greatly from the following propositions. (1) It is doubtful whether he regarded any particular, definite number of Books as the Canonical Scriptures of the New Testament; (2) but if he did, he, in all probability, included the *Pastor* of Hermas among them.

Tertullian is the next, in order of time, who refers to this work. Analogously to the quotations in Clement, what he says is especially interesting and valuable, not only, nor chiefly, for his testimony, that such a work was in existence at so early a period, but because of the rays of light which it sheds upon the doctrine and discipline of the Primitive Church. Tertullian quotes the *Pastor*, both in his Pre-montanist, and his Post-montanist days. When he was a Catholic, he treats it with respect, quoting it, as he, for the most part, quotes any other authority to which he deferred.¹ When he refers to it in his Montanist days, his hatred of it is expressed in unmeasured terms.

Amid all the marvellous unity of the Primitive Church, there were yet little clouds upon the horizon, no bigger

¹ De Orat. 'Nisi si Hermas ille, cujus Scriptura fere *Pastor* inscribitur.'

at first than a man's hand, which gave the first tokens of possible future discords. One of these little clouds was the way in which it behoved the Church to treat great sinners.

Speaking, of course, very generally, we may say that the tendency of the Roman Church was, from the earliest times, in the direction of lenity. And this lenity then applied both to her treatment of those who fell into errors of faith, as well as to those who were guilty of moral delinquencies. At the same time, there was always a respectable minority which disliked, and condemned this lenity, or as they, doubtless, would have preferred to call it, laxity in dealing with notorious sinners, who professed repentance. In the Churches of Carthage, and of North Africa, this minority became, still speaking of course within wide limits, if not a majority, still nearly equal in numbers with those who took the other side.

That the general tendency of the early Roman Church was in the direction indicated, might be shown by a large induction of facts, were this the place to enter into the question. It will suffice to notice one, which is interesting for other reasons. When the great dispute arose, in the middle of the third century, between Novatian and Pope Cornelius, as to the proper treatment of those who had lapsed into idolatry in the Decian Persecution, Novatian sought to be made bishop, or president of the Roman Church. The story of his ordination is well known, from the account given of it by his rival, Cornelius: an account, the substantial accuracy of which has never been shaken.

Novatian got together three ignorant persons, who are called bishops, from some unknown part of Italy, brought them to Rome, there made them drunk, and in that state induced them to lay their hands upon him, and ordain, or

consecrate, or appoint him Bishop of Rome.¹ Not a bishop, it must be observed, nor even a bishop of Rome, but the one only true Bishop, or Pope of the Roman Church, in the room of Cornelius.

Now it may be admitted at once, that at first sight this transaction seems to bear the aspect in which subsequent ages have, for the most part, regarded it. It looks as if Novatian, being a presbyter, and wishing to become a bishop, got together these miserable men who were in Episcopal Orders, and then befooled them into transmitting to him the grace and *character*, using the word in a technical sense, of Episcopal Ordination—and that this admission to a higher Order than the Presbyterate held good, though all who took part in it were guilty of grievous sin.

¹ Each time that I read this narrative in Eusebius (H. E. vi. 43), the more deeply I am impressed with the conviction, that it ought to receive the most minute and searching examination from some thoroughly impartial critic, who would carefully compare it with the Epistles of Cornelius, in St. Cyprian's works, together with some other extant documents. The questions which arise in my own mind are almost innumerable. For instance, was not the acerbity with which Cornelius regarded Novatian considerably enhanced, on account of the zeal which the latter had previously shown in maintaining the newly invented canonical discipline? He speaks of him, as Οὗτος γάρ τοι δογματιστής, ὁ τῆς ἐκκλησιαστικῆς ἐπιστήμης ὑπερασπιστής. Then what does he mean by saying of Novatian, ὡς ἂν εἰς βραχὺ τι μέρος, καὶ ἐλάχιστον τῆς Ἰταλίας ἀποστείλῃ? Where, and what was that little, yea the very smallest part of Italy? Then again, if these rustic (ἀγροίκους) prelates were diocesan bishops, in the modern sense, how came Cornelius to have the right and power, not only to depose them, but to ordain other bishops in their stead, and send them to fill the vacant sees? 'Καὶ τῶν λοιπῶν δὲ ἐπισκόπων διαδόχους εἰς τοὺς τόπους ἐν οἷς ἦσαν χειροτονήσαντες, ἀπεστάλακμεν.'

Are our Anglican bishops prepared to grant that a bishop of Rome, in the third century, claimed and exercised the right of depriving any diocesan bishops in Italy who displeased him, and that his claim was acquiesced in by the Universal Church, as it certainly was?

This, I believe, is a fair statement of the light in which this remarkable transaction has been looked at by the Church in subsequent generations. Let us now endeavour to ascertain what those who lived at the time thought of it.

In the first place, St. Cyprian, who was a contemporary, and who gave the greatest possible attention to all the circumstances of the case, treated the alleged ordination, or whatever it was, as absolutely null and void. And we must mark well the grounds upon which he did this. It was not by any denial of the Orders of Novatian's consecrators, a line of argument which would have been probably taken in later times. It was not by proving, or attempting to prove any irregularity, or informality in the mode of proceeding. It was by a simple statement of the principle in which he thoroughly believed—that any spiritual act of any kind was absolutely invalid, which was performed by those who, at the time of its performance, were not in communion with the Catholic Church, that is to say, with the one mystical Body of the Lord Jesus Christ.¹ Cornelius had been duly and canonically appointed Bishop of Rome. Therefore all persons acting in opposition to him, were *ipso facto* in a state of schism, and all their spiritual acts were, *ab initio*, null and void. Thus by a strictly logical chain of argument, he denied that Novatian was anything else than a mock *bishop*.

But the question may very fairly be asked, if presbyters and bishops were of the same Order, as far as the power

¹ See his Epistle to Antonianus, one of his ablest Letters. 'Quisquis ille est, et qualiscunque est, Christianus non est, qui in Christi ecclesia non est.' Also, 'Episcopatum tenere non posset, etiam si episcopus prius factus, a coepiscoporum suorum corpore, et ab ecclesiæ unitate descisceret.'

of ordination went, why did not Novatian procure some presbyters to make him Bishop of Rome, without being at the trouble of bringing bishops from another part of Italy to do so?

The answer to this is, that it will be found by a careful study of the Novatian troubles, that the presbyters of the Roman Church adhered so firmly and faithfully to their President Cornelius, that Novatian found it impossible to attach more than one of them¹ to his own faction. After a careful study of the whole transaction, I am of opinion that if Novatian could have succeeded in winning over, either a majority, or even a considerable minority of the forty-six presbyters of Rome, we should have heard nothing of his ordination, or appointment to the first See of Christendom by these three drunken bishops.

At the same time it must be borne in mind, that this event happened about the middle of the third century, that is to say, the very period to which we can trace the birth of that Canon Law, which first made a real, or fundamental, or essential distinction between the Presidents of the Presbyteral Colleges, and their co-presbyters as they were, even then, still universally called. It was the very period upon which we are able to lay our finger, when the doctrine, that to prevent schism, nothing must be done against the will of the chief presbyter, or the bishop, as he was by this time commonly called, was hardening and crystallizing, so to say, into the principle, that his presence at ordinations was necessary to ensure

¹ Cornelius only names Maximus, as one of the *original* Roman presbyters who adhered to Novatian. It is true that at the end of his Letter to Fabius of Antioch, he speaks of *five* presbyters, who were of his party. But is there any reason for supposing that they belonged originally to the Roman Presbyterate? May they not have been ordained by Novatian himself, after he became a bishop?

their validity. It has been shown in the history of St. Ignatius of Antioch, that at a much earlier period, the presence, or consent of the bishop was deemed necessary to the validity of a Eucharist. A very little reflection will show us why it was, that in process of time, it came to be thought that an ordinary presbyter might celebrate the Eucharist, but that it required a President of presbyters to confer ordination. It was a simple matter of convenience, and straightforward common sense. It would have been inconvenient, and it would have hindered the spiritual growth of the Flock of Christ, if none but the chief priests could give the Holy Communion of His Body and Blood, and offer the mystic Sacrifice, but there was no inconvenience in requiring as a general rule, and a matter of ecclesiastical discipline, the presence of the President, at the season of ordination. Thus, by a perfectly natural development of ideas, the opinion which at first sight seems so unaccountably anomalous, grew up, that whilst the inferior Minister might perform the superior act, none but a superior Minister could be the celebrant of the inferior act.

To candid and enquiring minds nothing can be so pleasant as to find, as they calmly investigate, light and harmony springing up, where they had previously imagined there was little but darkness and confusion. And certainly the annals of the Primitive Church are that one branch of history, to which, above all others, it is needful to apply, without passion, or prejudice, a few simple rules of philosophic criticism.

To return then to Hermas and his doctrine of repentance. It was this and nothing else, embodied as it was in the teaching of the Roman Church, which saved her from a frightful schism in the days of Novatian, and which very probably saved, humanly speaking, the whole

Catholic Church from splitting up into an infinite number of jarring, and mutually conflicting sects.

The doctrine of Hermas was emphatically, that there was, at any rate, *one* opportunity, and place of repentance afforded by God to baptized Christians, who fell into the grievous sins of fornication, or adultery. And to this doctrine, the Roman Church, represented by Cornelius and his presbyters, wisely resolved to adhere. We are able thus to understand the fierce denunciations of Hermas's teaching, in which Tertullian, after he became a Montanist, thought proper to indulge.

Hermas had written, probably but a short time before Tertullian's own age, that is to say, about the middle of the second century,¹ a full and explicit account of what he believed to be the true doctrine concerning repentance for post-baptismal sin.

One passage is so important, that it will be well to give it in full.²

‘Guard purity: and let no unchaste thought arise in thine heart: for if thou dost, thou wilt be guilty of grievous sin. Beware therefore of evil concupiscence, for they who follow it, follow in the ways of death. And be thou mindful of the Lord at all times, and thou wilt not sin. And where purity remaineth in the heart of a righteous man, there ought never to arise at any time an unholy thought. And I said unto the Angel which talked with me—“O my lord, if a man should have a believing wife in the Lord, and he find her committing adultery, doth that man sin, if he continue to live with

¹ It will be seen that no stress whatever is here laid upon who was the actual author of the *Pastor*. The only points of importance, are—
1. To determine, as near as may be, the time *when* it was written.
2. Whether it may be taken as an exposition of the prevailing teaching of the place *where* it was written.

² Lib. ii. Mand. 4.

her?" And he said unto me—"So long as her husband knoweth not her sin, he is without fault, if he live with her. But if her husband know that his wife hath sinned, and hath not repented, but remaineth in her fornication, and he continue to live with her, then shall he be guilty of her sin, and a partaker of her adultery." And I said unto him—"What then ought a man to do, if his wife continue in her sin?" And he answered—"Let him put her away, and let him abide alone. But if he put her away, and marry another, he committeth adultery." And I said unto him—"But, and if she that is put away repent, and have a desire to return unto her husband, shall she not be received back again?" And he saith unto me, "Yea: for if her own husband receive her not again, he sinneth a great sin: for he ought to receive back the sinner that repenteth, though not often. For there is *one* repentance to the servants of God. Because of repentance therefore, if a man put away his wife, he ought not to marry another. And this thing is the same in the man as in the woman. And adultery is not in them only which defile the flesh: but he also is an adulterer who maketh an idol.¹ And if a woman persevere in such deeds, depart from her, and dwell not with her, for if thou dwell with her, thou art a partaker of her sin. Wherefore it hath been commanded you, that in such a case ye marry not again, neither the husband, nor yet the wife: for in so doing, there may be repentance. And not to give an occasion for sin, do I say these things. Rather let him that hath sinned, sin no more. But as

¹ These words were either introduced by the writer, with the object of paving the way for the further innovation of granting pardon to such as lapsed into idolatry, or else are an interpolation made about the time of the Decian Persecution.

for former sins, God, Who hath the power of healing, will grant a remedy, for He is able to do all things."

' Again I asked the Angel, and said unto him—"Forasmuch as the Lord hath counted me worthy, that thou shouldest dwell with me, declare unto me, in a few words, the meaning of what thou hast said, for I am slow of understanding, and am not able to comprehend anything." And he answered and said unto me—"I am he which am set over repentance, and I give understanding unto all them that repent: for he that repenteth, obtaineth great understanding. He perceiveth that he hath sinned and done wickedly in the sight of the Lord, and with the understanding he remembereth that he hath sinned, and he repenteth, and he doeth no more wickedly, but he worketh that which is good, and humbleth his soul, and chasteneth it, because he hath sinned. Thou seest therefore that repentance is great understanding." And I said unto him—"This is the cause, wherefore, O my lord, I diligently enquire concerning all these things, because, even because I am a sinner, that I may know what I ought to do that I may live, for my sins are many." And he said unto me—"Thou shalt live, if thou wilt keep these my commandments: and whosoever heareth and doeth these commandments shall live in God."

' And I said unto him—"Even now, O my lord, I have heard from certain doctors,¹ that there is no other repentance save that which we have when we go down into the water, and receive remission of our sins, that we should not sin any more, but abide in purity." And he saith

¹ Referring evidently to such traditions of Apostolic teaching as are embodied in Hebrews vi. 4-6, and elsewhere. This passage of *Hermas* would alone show that there were two divergent schools in the early Primitive Church, on the doctrine of Repentance. The Author of the *Pastor* evidently aimed at reconciling them.

unto me—"Thou hast rightly heard. And now, because thou diligently enquirest all things, I will show this also unto thee, but not as giving an occasion of sin unto those who are about to believe, or who already have believed in the Lord. For they who have believed, or who will believe, do not have *repentance*, but *remission* of sins.¹ For to those who were called before these days, the Lord appointed repentance:² for God knoweth the thoughts of all hearts, and the weakness of men, and the manifold wickedness of the devil, how he contrives evil against the servants of God, and maliciously plots against them. The merciful Lord therefore hath had pity on what He hath made, and hath appointed that repentance of which I speak, and hath given me power over it. Wherefore also, I say unto thee, that after that great and holy calling,³ if any one be tempted of the devil and sin, he hath *one* repentance: but if he sin after that, and doth penance, it shall not profit the man, which doeth such things; for hardly shall he live unto God."⁴ And I said, "O my lord, I am restored to life again, since I have diligently heard these commandments. For I know, that if I shall hereafter add nothing to my sins, I shall be

¹ Meaning that when heathen adults were baptized, the forgiveness of sins was granted, technically speaking, by the laver of Baptism, not because of their repentance.

² This probably refers to the times of the Old Covenant, before the institution of the Christian Sacrament of Baptism.

³ Of Baptism.

⁴ It is impossible to understand this without a close study of the original, and scarcely even then. 'Si autem subinde peccet, et penitentiam agit, non proderit homini talia agent; difficile enim vivet Deo.' Dr. Hefele's note upon this is good. 'Id est, non in ecclesiam est recipiendus, et vix salutem consequetur.' It will be seen hereafter, that even if the doctrine of Hermas were not an innovation—which I am persuaded it was—the Catholic Church has since made a vital innovation upon the doctrine of Hermas himself.

saved." And he said, "Verily thou shalt be saved; and all, whosoever shall keep these commandments shall be saved."

It may be well to remark, that to any one wishing to gain a thorough insight into the teaching of the Early Church upon the great questions here involved, the foregoing passage is simply invaluable. It must not be read merely, but diligently studied, and very carefully compared with other passages in the *Pastor*, and with Clement of Alexandria. This latter great Doctor avowedly bases his own teaching about repentance upon that of the *Pastor*.¹ What makes all this so intensely interesting is, that by the aid of Tertullian, we shall be able to trace the two parallel streams of thought and doctrine about repentance, in these primitive times, almost as clearly as if a contemporary writer had intentionally mapped them out for us.

Even then, in the second century, it was felt that there were passages embodied in writings which were generally allowed to be Apostolic, which were hard to be understood in their plain, obvious sense. There was 'the sin unto death,' for the remission of which, prayer must not be made, of St. John's Epistle. There were the words in what is now called the Epistle to the Hebrews—

¹ See especially Strom. lib. ii. cc. 12, 13. 'Ο δὲ αὐτὸς (that is, the *Pastor*, which he had just quoted), καὶ τὴν μετάνοιαν σύνεσιν εἶναι φησιν μεγάλην, μετανοῶν γὰρ ἐφ' οἷς ἔδρασεν οὐκ ἔτι ποιεῖ ἢ λέγει, βιασυνίζων δὲ ἐφ' οἷς ἡμαρτεν τὴν ἑαυτοῦ ψυχὴν ἀγαθοῦργει. "Ἀφεςις τοίνυν ἁμαρτιῶν μετανόους διαφέρει, ἄμφω δὲ δείκνυσσι τὰ ἐφ' ἡμῖν. Τὸν οὖν εἰληφότα τὴν ἄφεσιν τῶν ἁμαρτιῶν οὐκ ἔτι ἁμαρτάνειν χρή· κ.τ.λ.

"Ἐδωκεν οὖν ἄλλην ἐπὶ τοῖς κἂν τῇ πίστει περιπίπτουσι τινι πλημμελίᾳ πολυέλεος ὢν μετάνοιαν δευτέραν, ἣν εἴ τις ἐκπειρασθεὶς μετὰ τὴν κλῆσιν, βιωσθεὶς δὲ καὶ κατασοφισθεὶς μίαν ἔτι μετάνοιαν ἀμετανόητον λάβῃ· ἐκουσίως γὰρ ἁμαρτανόντων ἡμῶν, proceeding to quote Heb. x. 26, 27, and endeavouring to reconcile it with his system. Αἱ δὲ συνέχεις καὶ ἐπάλληλοι ἐπὶ τοῖς ἁμαρτήμασι μετάνοιαι οὐδὲν τῶν καθάπαξ μὴ πεπιστευκότων διαφέρουσιν, ἢ μόνω, κ.τ.λ.

‘For if we sin voluntarily, after we have received the knowledge of the truth, there is no longer left a sacrifice concerning sins, but a certain¹ fearful expectation of judgment, and fiery jealousy about to consume the adversaries.’

It was felt by the writer of the *Pastor*, whoever he was, that if such passages were to be taken without any qualification, very terrible practical evils and scandals would, probably, be the result. In the first place, it would be impossible to reconcile them, and the doctrine which they seemed to involve, with innumerable passages of Scripture which speak of God’s love and compassion, and of His willingness to receive the returning and repenting sinner. And in the next place, it might be expected that multitudes who sinned after Baptism would be driven to absolute recklessness and despair.²

Thus then it was that a wise and very influential school in the Church, represented by the writer, who has come down to us under the name of Hermas, were led to formulate the doctrine, that though there was but *one Baptism* for the remission of sins, which remission alone could be properly and technically called the *remission*, or *forgiveness* of sins, yet there was one further

¹ Τίς. The English reader must be on his guard.

² See both these arguments urged at considerable length in the Apostolical Constitutions. See ii. 12, and many other places. Just as Clemens Alex. avowedly based his teaching about repentance, on the *Pastor*, so the doctrine of the Apostolical Constitutions upon this subject, seems to rely implicitly upon the same authority. But there is an additional source of interest in the Apostolical Constitutions, and that is to observe the cleverness with which they make the novel doctrine of penance do duty in support of their own novel doctrine of episcopacy. Ὑμῶν τοῖς ἐπισκόποις εἴρηται, ὁ ἕαν δῆσῃτε, κ.τ.λ. St. Matt. xviii. 18. Κρίνε οὖν ὧ ἐπίσκοπε, μετὰ ἐξουσίας, ὡς ὁ Θεός, κ.τ.λ. To do the author of the *Pastor* the barest justice, he would have been very shocked at all this.

opportunity of forgiveness, especially applicable to post-baptismal sins; and to this they gave the *technical* name of *penitence*, or *repentance*. This penitence, it has been rather too hastily assumed by nearly all writers, was allowed by Hermas and his school to obtain remission of sins but *once*, and once only. This however is a mistake. It will be seen by weighing carefully the teaching of the *Pastor*, that St. Hermas speaks with great caution. He, in the interest of God's mercy and compassion, endeavours to make it plain, that there was one chance of repentance and remission of sins for Christians who fell, after their baptism, into the grievous crimes of fornication, or adultery. But of anything beyond, he will not speak.¹ He had received neither an inward nor an outward commission to proclaim forgiveness to those who had been once and again made whole, and who after that caused the wounds of the Son of God to bleed afresh, and put Him to an open shame, and did despite to the Spirit of the covenant of grace by which they had been sanctified.

And how very necessary, and how very wise was this reticence on the part of Hermas may be seen in the history of the Catholic Church for the next century, or century and a half. We can trace the effect of the parallel stream of thought, parallel, yet running in an exactly opposite direction, which led to the later phases of Montanism, when what had been originally an effort perhaps, to gain an increase of Christian liberty, degenerated, at last, into a hard and narrow bigotry. We trace it in the Novatian and Donatist troubles which went nigh to break up, as we have said, at least the

¹ Still we must carefully bear in mind what strong collateral evidence all this is that the doctrine of the *Pastor* was an innovation.

Italian and African Churches into miserable and narrow-minded sects. And lastly we can understand why Tertullian, when with characteristic zeal and fervour he gave himself up, heart and soul, to the defence and propagation of Montanism, should denounce the *Pastor* in such fiery language as we find in his *De Pudicitia*. The passages are so full of interest, and set forth so clearly the antagonistic view to the milder teaching of Hermas, by the ablest advocate which the Montanist spirit ever won for itself, that they are given at some length.¹

‘This then is what the carnally-minded² would say—“that God, the righteous Judge, desireth the repentance, rather than the death of that sinner, who preferred death to repentance.” But if this be so, we gain merit by sinning. Come on then, you rope-dancer of modesty and chastity, and every kind of sexual purity, who by such a discipline, far away from truth, walk with nicely balancing step upon a slender thread, weighing the flesh by the spirit, ruling the soul by faith, guiding the eye by fear, why are you so wholly taken up with walking? Pray proceed, if you can, and if you wish. You are perfectly secure, and as we may say, upon solid ground. If any infirmity of the flesh, any absence of mind, any wandering of the eye should shake you down from your rope, well—“God is good. He spreads out His arms to receive His own, not the heathen: a second repentance is in store for you: a second time you can, from an adulterer become a Christian.” And this is what you tell me, O most benignant interpreter of the will of God! I might perhaps the better give heed to you, if that

¹ These passages will be found scattered throughout the *De Pudicitia*.

² ‘Psychici.’ This was a favourite name with Tertullian for the Catholic party.

Scripture of the *Pastor*, which alone has a tender affection for adulterers, deserved to be inscribed in the divine Canon, if it were not, by the full determination of even your own Churches, judged to be false and apocryphal.¹ Adulterous itself, it is a worthy patron of adulterers. From it you may derive initiation in other ways, and perchance gain as your patron that other Shepherd, whom you pourtray on your Chalice, a prostitutor indeed of the Christian Sacrament, a worthy idol of drunkenness, a fitting refuge of the adultery which will follow such a Chalice, from which you will drink nothing more freely than the flavour of your Sheep of a second repentance. But I drink of the Scriptures of that Shepherd, which cannot be broken.² This is the Shepherd whom John offers me, together with the laver of repentance, and the duty which accompanies it—"Bring forth worthy fruits of penance."

Towards the conclusion of the same Treatise, after proving from the Apostolic Scriptures, to his own satisfaction, that there was no admission into the visible Church for baptized Christians who committed the mortal sins of fornication, or adultery, he proceeds—"I wish, though I do it indeed redundantly, to bring forward the testimony of a certain companion of the Apostles. It is suitable, in proximate order, for the confirmation of the

¹ Although Tertullian probably overstates his case, *more suo*, it must, I think be allowed, that the Catholic party did not feel very sure of their ground, in quoting the *Pastor* as Scripture. Stripping Tertullian's language of exaggeration, it probably shows that his opponents conceded the *Pastor* to be what was called technically a *γραφὴ ἀντιλεγόμενη*.

² The reader will notice the interesting allusions to the custom of depicting Christ, as the Good Shepherd, carrying a sheep, or a lamb, upon the chalices of glass, or wood, used in the communion service of the Primitive Church.

discipline of the first Teachers. There is extant a Treatise of Barnabas, inscribed to the Hebrews. He was a man of such authority that Paul set him near to himself, in the strict observance of abstinence, "Or I only and Barnabas, have we not the power of doing this?" And anyhow, the Epistle of Barnabas is more generally received among the Churches than that apocryphal *Pastor* of adulterers.'

This then gives in their own language, bringing the passages into juxtaposition, the antagonistic views of Hermas and Tertullian upon the vital doctrine of post-baptismal repentance.

And here arises the tremendous question, a question, which nothing but the firm resolve to shrink from no investigation which the truth of history may require, would induce me to enter upon.¹ It is whether of the two schools, that represented by Hermas, or that represented by Tertullian, had the best right to claim the inheritance of Apostolic tradition, and to embody the teaching of the early Primitive Church? And consequently, whether of the twain, firmly upheld the deposit of the Faith upon this particular point, as it had been handed down to him, and as he had received it? And on the other hand, who it was who revolutionized the Church's doctrine, and introduced what, it is not using too strong language, to call another Gospel, a better Gospel it may be, but which was not the Gospel which the Church had proclaimed until the Author of the *Pastor* announced the communications, or revelations which he professed to have received

¹ When the conclusion, which I am about to state in the following pages, was, for the first time, forced upon me by a careful comparison of the *De Pudicitia* with the writings of Hermas, I could with truth have adopted the language of St. Jerome, when his attention was first directed to a very different question. Comment in *Esaïam*, Pref. ad lib. xvi.

from an angelic visitant. The innovator, the mighty innovator, he may well be called, was no other than the writer who bore, or who assumed the name of Hermas.

These assertions are not made lightly. They are not made upon slender, or doubtful evidence. They are felt to be so grave in the consequences which they will involve in the minds of all who will be brave enough to look them in the face, that they never would have been brought forward, without the absolute conviction that the evidence in support of them is not only strong, but irrefragable and overwhelming. The evidence is drawn from Tertullian's famous Work *De Pudicitia*, or 'On Modesty,' which has been already referred to. It was written when he was a thorough Montanist—when he had not only been driven from the communion of the Catholic Church, but had become, in some respects, her adversary. Nothing therefore that he says in the way of mere argument, nothing drawn from his own explanations of Scripture will be made use of. All that will be done will be to take his statements of facts, and chiefly facts upon which there was an agreement between himself and Catholics: so that there is no ground for supposing, either that he was making mere rhetorical flourishes, or that he was venturing upon assertions which would have been disputed by his opponents.¹

¹ A crucial test of Tertullian's reliability as to statements of facts, which might be supposed fairly to come within his own cognisance, may be found in this, that by far the most terrible instance of corruption which he brings against the Catholics of his time, and which we might well have hesitated to believe on the evidence of his testimony alone, is known to be true from such an unexceptionable witness as St. Cyprian. The passages are best given in Latin. 'Sed apud te agape in caccabis fervet, fides in culinis calet, spes in ferculis jacet. Sed major his est agape, quia per hanc aduliscentes tui cum sororibus dormiunt.' De Jejun. sub finem. See S. Cyp. Epist. iv. 'Legimus

The proximate occasion of Tertullian's writing his Treatise on Modesty was, as he tells us, his hearing of a decree which had been issued by the Supreme Pontiff, the Bishop of Bishops.¹ 'I hear that an edict'—these are Tertullian's exact words—'and a peremptory one, has been issued. The Supreme Pontiff forsooth, that is to say the Bishop of Bishops, proclaims—"I forgive both the sins of adultery and fornication to those who have discharged the

litteras tuas, frater carissime . . . postulans et desiderans, ut tibi rescriberemus quid nobis de iis virginibus videatur quæ cum statu suo semel esse, et continentiam firmiter tenere decreverint, detectæ sint postea in eodem lecto pariter mansisse cum masculis, ex quibus unum diaconum esse dicis, plane easdem quæ se cum viris dormisse confessæ sint, asseverare se integras esse.'

¹ 'Pontifex Maximus, Episcopus Episcoporum.' Every one is agreed in thinking that these words refer to the contemporary Bishop of Rome, Victor, or Zephyrinus; but the sense in which they are to be understood opens out a fruitful field of controversy. It is argued by Protestant, or rather by Anglican Theologians, that Tertullian in making use of these words, must not be taken to imply, that they were titles given by the Catholics of his time to the Bishop of Rome, but that he himself employed, or invented them in an ironical sense. This is ingenious, but if it were in accordance with fact, Tertullian would make no point against contemporary Catholics. His argument would miss its mark at the very outset. Besides, if Anglicans maintain, that when Tertullian calls the Bishop of Rome the Supreme Pontiff, and the Bishop of Bishops, he must not be taken as a witness to the *fact* of such titles being seriously accorded to him in the second century, then they must, in consistency, admit that if he speaks of bishops as an order of men distinct from presbyters, his evidence is equally unreliable, as to the belief of the Primitive Church, upon this question likewise. We may not pick and choose the exact facts upon which we will allow Tertullian to be a witness of the opinions of his own time. Would it not perhaps be, on the whole, most probable that this expression, 'Bishop of Bishops,' implied that the Church of the second century recognised, on the one hand, the equality or identity of bishops and presbyters, and on the other, allowed some kind of primacy, or administrative disciplinary power to be attached to the official representative of the Roman Church?

penance.”¹ The publication of this edict by the Bishop of Rome seems to have driven the fiery African almost to the verge of madness. And if we try to look at things from Tertullian’s point of view, there is little room for surprise. The change introduced was of the most momentous character, involving the most tremendous consequences.

However sweeping and important the change from the ancient constitution of the Church to a prelatie form of government, which we have been able, in previous chapters, to trace to about the middle of the third century, it was as nothing compared with this doctrinal change, the foundation for which was laid by the publication of the *Pastor*, and whose natural and logical complement was the Roman edict, spoken of by Tertullian. This enables us to understand why the writer of the *Pastor* professed to have received his teaching from an Angel of God, perhaps also, why he assumed the name of Hermas; or if his own name happened to be Hermas, why he may not have been unwilling that it should be generally supposed that he was the Hermas spoken of by St. Paul, a generation or two before.

When Hermas speaks of conversing with angels, he intended his words to be taken, not as any mere fanciful prettiness of expression, as has been frequently done by writers in every age, but as downright, sober earnest. He

¹ ‘Audio etiam edictum esse propositum, et quidem peremptorium, Pontifex scilicet Maximus, quod est Episcopus Episcoporum edicit—Ego et mœchiæ et fornicationis delicta penitentia functis dimitto.’

Scholars will see that Tertullian’s words here, as they so often do, admit of shades of meaning. I believe myself that the best translation of ‘*quod est*’ (having regard to the peculiar style of the author) would be, ‘*because he is.*’ I have not ventured upon this rendering in the text for fear of raising a theological tempest.

could not hope to innovate with success upon the then received doctrine of the Catholic Church upon any lower authority than that of an alleged supernatural, and therefore inspired and infallible communication. This consideration will help us to understand why it was, that the *Pastor* received so large an amount of recognition as authoritative Scripture for two centuries, that is to say, from about the middle of the second century to the middle of the fourth, and then fell, first into neglect, and afterwards into oblivion. It was written, almost avowedly, for a particular purpose. And when this purpose had been accomplished, there was no special excellence of thought, or of language in the Treatise to save it from being forgotten. To the present age, which examines, or honestly tries at least to examine, the foundations of all things human, it is as those long-lost, buried cities of Campania, which are revealed to us exactly as they existed 1800 years ago, and which, as we wander through their now silent streets, tell us their own tale with a voice more eloquent than that of any spoken words.

Startling then as the assertion seems, it is a fact capable of proof, amounting to demonstration, that from, at least, the death of the Apostle St. John until about A.D. 200, there was no ecclesiastical authority which presumed, or ventured to grant restoration to the communion of the visible Church to baptized Christians, who had fallen into the sins of fornication and adultery. Upon this point Tertullian did nothing more than uphold the discipline which he found existing. He maintained the ancient tradition. The Catholic Church departed from it. But as Tertullian happened to be in a minority, it is needless to observe that he has been branded, in all subsequent ages, with the name of schismatic. In his own time, he was freely called by the Catholics a heretic as well.

But though, as we shall prove, Tertullian differed from the Church, or rather the Church differed from him, as to there being a second cleansing on earth for baptized adulterers, both Tertullian and the whole Christian Church were agreed that there was no second cleansing, no second repentance granted to *murderers* and *idolaters*. This was a further innovation, which was introduced later on. When restoration to Church communion was first granted to wilful shedders of blood, I do not know.¹ The question of the readmission of those who had lapsed into *idolatry* first came up, at least as a serious question, after the persecution by Decius, in St. Cyprian's time.

This question too was at length decided in the interests of mildness and lenity, but this further innovation led to what were called the Donatist and Novatian schisms.

To proceed with the proof of these assertions.

After asking where this Papal edict is to be posted up — ‘shall it be,’ he cries, ‘upon the very gates of lust?’

¹ We can see that the Catholic forgery of the beautiful legend of St. John and the Robber, paved, or rather was *intended* to pave, the way for the readmission of wilful shedders of human blood, into the visible Church, just as the nearly contemporary forgery of the *Pastor* paved the way for another class of sinners. The Catholic party, however, did not feel sufficiently sure of their newly invented theory of ecclesiastical, or papal authority, to venture, for the present, upon this further innovation. If they had, the position of parties would very probably have been reversed. Tertullian's school would have come down to us as the Catholic Church, the Catholic Church as a schismatical body. But God's Providence overruled all these things for the best. I had long thought that the legend of St. John and the Robber was probably a genuine relic of the Apostolic age. I was deceived by its seemingly innocent look, apparently devoid of controversy. One, or two expressions, however, betray it to the practised eye in an unmistakable manner. ‘Τοῖς δάκρυσι βαπτιζόμενος ἐκ δευτέρου:’ and ‘αὐτὴν τὴν δεξιὰν ὡς ὑπὸ τῆς μετανοίας κεκαθαρμένην καταφιλῶν:’ and ‘ἰδοὺς μέγα παράδειγμα μετανοίας ἀληθινῆς, καὶ μέγα γνῶρισμα παλιγγενεσίας.’ Eus. H. E. iii. 23.

Beneath the very titles¹ of the passions ?' He proceeds—
'This edict is read and promulgated in the very Church itself, that Church which is called a virgin.'

This affords a curious instance of the manner in which history repeats itself. This Papal Bull, as it would have been called in later times, was posted up on the church gates, just as another Papal Bull, more important in its immediate results, but not more important to the historian who enquires into the origin of great revolutions, was posted up at Wittenburg.

Not long afterwards Tertullian adds—'When they promise pardon to adulterers and fornicators, they do it in spite of the primary discipline of the Christian name²—that discipline to which the very world itself bears testimony, so that it strives to punish our women, by the defiling, rather than the tormenting of the flesh, endeavouring to deprive them of what they value more than life.'

In the next chapter, he endeavours to meet the arguments drawn by Catholics from the Scriptures in favour of granting ecclesiastical pardon to sins of the flesh. These I pass over, as resting, both upon one side and the other, on the right of private judgment, and therefore not material to my present purpose, except so far as this, that if Tertullian's charge of innovation had not been true, it would have been met by a direct denial, not by a defence of the innovation from Scripture.

The next chapter is so important, that its substance must be given at some length. He is arguing that adultery is a sin of such a nature, so closely connected with idolatry and murder, on either hand, that it is impossible to single it out from them as entitled to pardon, and he

¹ By this word Tertullian seems to allude to the names by which churches were very anciently known at Rome, as the *titles* of so and so.

² 'Adversus principalem Christiani nominis disciplinam.'

charges the Catholics with gross inconsistency in granting absolution to the former sin, and yet maintaining the ancient discipline, by withholding it from the latter.

‘Of how deep guilt is the crime of adultery, in the first place let the law of God declare. After forbidding the worship of false gods, and the fabrication of idols, after enjoining the veneration of the Sabbath, after commanding obedience to parents, which is, as it were, a secondary worship of God, He lays down no other precept before this—“Thou shalt not commit adultery.”¹ For spiritual chastity and sanctity were suitably followed by corporeal integrity. And in defence of it, the Law prohibited its deadly foe. That you may understand what a crime it is, He placed the ordinance for restraining it, next to the prohibition of idolatry. What is second, is not very far distant from what is first. Nothing is so near to the first as the second. That which is formed out of the first is a kind of other first. Thus nigh at hand is adultery to idolatry. Idolatry was often reprovèd amongst the Israelites, under the names of adultery and fornication. Thus likewise will they be united in one and the same condemnation. But after placing first the precept—“Thou shalt not commit adultery,” God immediately subjoins—“Thou shalt not kill.” So then, by their position in the very forefront of the most holy Law, in the principal titles of the celestial edict, devoted to the proscription of the chiefest crimes, you may learn to discern their surpassing rank. For there is a dignity of evil, according as it is stationed at the summit, or in the centre of things that are most bad.’

‘I behold a kind of pomp and pride of adultery, on

¹ In Tertullian’s Decalogue, as compared with ours, the position of the sixth and seventh commandments was inverted. Our Lord Himself appears to have followed this arrangement.

the one hand allied with idolatry going before, associated with murder, on the other, following after. Between these two most eminent thrones¹ of wickedness, it fills, without doubt, a worthy seat of honour in the midst. Enclosed by such sides, hedged about by such ribs, who shall pluck adultery from her corporate coherencies, from the common bond of neighbour crimes, from the embrace of kindred wickednesses, that she alone should be singled out to enjoy the fruit of repentance? Will not idolatry on this side, murder on that, hold her back? And if they had a voice, would they not cry aloud—"Such is the unity in which Scripture and the very nature of things have bound us together, that it is impossible to divorce us? She is ours, and without us she cannot be. For I, idolatry very often minister occasion to adultery. My groves and my mountains, and my living streams, the very temples in the cities know her well. I, murder likewise am a fellow labourer in the cause of adultery. Not to speak of tragedies—my poisoners, my magicians could testify this day, how many seductions, how many rivalries I avenge, how many guards, how many informers, how many accomplices I make away with. Even among Christians, there is no adultery without us. For where idolatry is, there also is the working of the unclean spirit: there too is murder, for when man is defiled then is he truly slain. Either then the aids of repentance will not be suitable to the sins of lust, or else they will be appropriate also to us. We either keep adultery in our company, or else we follow her." Thus speak, in a figure, the things themselves: but if their voice fail to be heard, up rises an idolater, up a mur-

¹ Tertullian seems quite to have anticipated our English Milton in this gorgeous description, which can only be fully appreciated by being read in the original Latin.

derer, and between the two stands an adulterer. Performing penance, together they sit down in sackcloth, they shiver in ashes—with the same breath they groan, with the same prayers they entreat, with the same knees they beg, upon the same Mother they call. What are you about O most tender and humane discipline? Either you ought to be like-minded to all of these, for “blessed are the peace-makers,” or else you ought to range yourself on our side.¹ Will you condemn the murderer and the idolater, once for all, and take away the adulterer from the midst of them?—the adulterer, the successor of the idolater, the predecessor of the murderer, the colleague of both? This is respect of persons. The more pitiable repentances you leave unpitied behind!’²

‘Plainly, if you will show by what patronage of precedents, and heavenly precepts you open wide the gate of repentance to adultery, and thereby to fornication also, I will here, at the threshold, meet you sword in hand.’

Tertullian then proceeds at great length to discuss passages of Scripture, which were alleged by the Catholics in favour of their relaxation of the ancient discipline. But as this part of the controversy is quite immaterial to our present purpose, it is passed over, except so far as

¹ That is, of Tertullian, and those who, like him, refused restoration to the Church on earth to adulterers, as well as to murderers and idolaters.

² This last paragraph will repay the closest study. It completely disposes of the argument advanced by some Catholic writers, that *because* certain classes of sinners were put to penance in the early Church, therefore they must have received absolution sooner or later. But as Tertullian shows—the murderer, the adulterer, the idolater, all three ‘sat in sackcloth, shivered in ashes,’ but they none of them received absolution from *man*, until the Pope, A.D. 200, or thereabouts, for the *first time*, exercised his power, or supposed power, of forgiving sins—‘I forgive the sins of adultery and fornication.’

his argument embodies statements of absolute, or inferential facts.

Thus, after reviewing the condition of the Jews under the old Law, he says in effect—‘If you apply the laxity of the ancient indulgences to the more fully developed discipline of the present day, then you will grant pardon to the idolater, and to every apostate, because we find the People itself, so often guilty of these crimes, as often reinstated in their former privileges. You will maintain communion with the murderer, because Ahab through prayer washed away the stain of Naboth’s blood; and David by confession was cleansed from the guilt of Uriah’s slaughter, together with adultery its inciting cause.’

Then, with much earnestness, he asks his opponents to give him one single instance, one solitary precedent, since the Church began, up to the time of the then recent Papal edict, where restoration to communion had been granted to an adulterer. That all sins were washed away in Baptism he held in common with the whole Catholic Church; but he urges—‘men were not members of Christ, the temples of God the Holy Ghost, at the time that pardon was thus obtained for adultery.’ ‘Therefore from the very moment that the body changed its condition, and having been baptized into Christ, put on Christ, and was redeemed with a great price, even with the Blood of the Lord and Lamb, if you can lay hold of a single precedent, whether precept, or law, or sentence of indulgence granted, or to be granted to adultery and fornication, then you have at our hands a definition of the exact date from whence the question takes its rise.’ A fairer, or a more telling challenge than this to those, whom Tertullian, were he living now, would probably call the New Catholics, it is impossible to conceive—a

challenge to which it is almost needless to say, no reply was ever given, except anathema to the audacious champion of Old Catholicism.

After this he argues with those who applied the Parable of the Prodigal Son, not to the heathen, but to Christians, and shows the utter inconsistency of the new Catholic discipline. 'If it be a Christian,' he says, 'who wandering far from his Father's home, squanders in heathenish living, the substance received from God, the substance of the Holy Spirit, the substance of eternal hope: if, stripped of his spiritual goods, he has handed over his service to the prince of this world, the devil, and has by him been appointed to the business of feeding swine—what else, forsooth, but the flock of demons—if he recover his senses, and return to the Father, then not only adulterers and fornicators, but idolaters, and blasphemers and deniers of Christ, and every grade of apostates¹ may, by this Parable, make their satisfaction. Even the apostate will recover his former robe, the garment of the Holy Spirit; the apostate will have a renewal of the ring, the sign and seal of baptism; Christ will be sacrificed afresh, and the apostate will sit down with Him at the feast.'

Then winding up his argument from the Parables generally, he says very fairly—'If my opponents are eager to accommodate the Sheep, and the Piece of Silver, and the voluptuousness of the Son to the case of the *Christian* sinner, so that they may endow adultery and fornication with the gift of repentance, then it will be right, either that all other crimes, equally capital, should

¹ Yet with this very passage before his eyes, as it were, the Oxford translator could venture to say—'Tertullian does not specify any other mortal sins, except sins of the flesh.' Pref. to Trans. of Tertull. Oxf. Lib. of the Fathers, Pref. p. 6.

be conceded to be remissible, or else that their peers, adultery and fornication, should be retained in the category of offences irremissible.'

All this shows in the most incontestable, because incidental and unsuspecting manner, that the question of granting ecclesiastical pardon to murderers and idolaters had not, up to this time, been even so much as openly raised in the Church.

In the next place, after giving a perhaps novel interpretation to the prohibition of '*Blood*,' in the Apostolic Council of Jerusalem, which, however, is of no consequence to *our* argument, he proceeds to state the universal practice of the Church—'Hence it is, that there is no restoration of peace granted by the churches to idolatry, or to blood. From which final decision of theirs that the Apostles should have departed, is I think not right to believe; or if some find it possible so to believe, they will be bound to prove it.'

Tertullian knew perfectly well, when he said this, that no such precedent could be found.

Proceeding with his subject, he gives very weighty reasons for thinking, that the argument drawn from the supposed forgiveness of the incestuous Corinthian by St. Paul, is founded upon an entire misconception of the Apostle's meaning. He says that the words, 'to whom ye forgive anything, I forgive also,' must be taken to refer to some small and moderate indulgence; for, he proceeds, 'even now when the ancient discipline is so shamefully relaxed, you,' that is, the Catholics, 'do not grant indulgences for mortal sins, without a public proclamation, specifying what they are.' 'Why do you,' he says, 'when introducing the repentant adulterer into the church, for the purpose of melting the brethren by his prayers, lead him into the midst and prostrate him, robed

in sackcloth and ashes, shivering with disgrace and terror, before the widows and the presbyters, catching at the hem of every robe, clasping every knee, kissing every footprint?' Then he adds in a strain of bitter irony against the author of this relaxation, the contemporary Bishop of Rome, 'And why do you, good Pastor, and blessed Pope¹ that you are, why do you, to bring about the desired end, preach, with all the allurements of mercy in your power; and under the parable of the "Sheep," go in quest of your "goats?" Would the Apostle so carelessly have granted indulgence to such atrocious licentiousness, as fornication aggravated by incest, as not at least to have exacted from the sinner even this legally prescribed garb of penitence?'

It is impossible, without taking up an unreasonable space, to do justice to the vigour and exhaustiveness of Tertullian's argument. He examines and discusses the subject in every possible light.

Then he concludes his Treatise by a splendid and eloquent appeal for the apostate Christian, especially for him who had lapsed into idolatry under torture;—not that either Tertullian, or the Catholic Church did, at that time, readmit such to communion, but that he established, according to every principle of consistency, that such had a better right to restoration after repentance, than the fornicator and the adulterer.

'Whatever authority, whatever reason restores ecclesiastical peace to the adulterer and fornicator, the same will be bound to come to the aid of the murderer and the idolater in their repentance, certainly of the apostate at least, whom, after hard struggling in the battle of con-

¹ Yet Dr. J. M. Neale actually refers to this passage as evidence that 'Pope' was thus early given as a title of honour to bishops generally. Hist. of the Patriarchate of Alexandria, vol. i. p. 32.

fession, savage cruelty has at length by torments overthrown. It were unworthy of God and of His mercy, Who prefers the repentance of a sinner to his death, that they who have fallen in the heat of passion should have easier return to the bosom of the Church than they who have fought hard for God. Indignation urges me to speak. Contaminated bodies you will recall rather than gory ones! Which kind of repentance is most deserving of pity—that which prostrates before you pampered, or lacerated flesh? Which pardon is in all causes the more justly to be conceded, that which a voluntary, or that which an involuntary sinner implores? No one, willingly, is compelled to apostatize, no one, unwillingly commits fornication. Lust knows no violence, no coercion, except its own. Apostasy on the other hand, what ingeniousness of butchery, what divers kinds of torment enforce it! Which has most really apostatized, he who has abandoned Christ amid agonies, or he who has done so amid delights? He who when losing Him grieved, or he who when losing Him sported? And yet those scars graven on the Christian warrior, scars it may be very precious in the eyes of Christ, because they yearned after conquest, scars glorious because only in not conquering did they cease, scars over which even the devil himself yet sighs, scars with an unhappiness of their own, but at least a chaste one, with a repentance that mourns, but blushes not to the Lord for pardon—these you refuse. But you wash away the second time the sins of those who to denial have added sacrilege. In their case only is the flesh weak. Ah! there is no flesh so strong as that which crushes out the spirit.’

These passages will give a very fair idea of the position taken up by Tertullian, and the attitude assumed by himself and a very large and influential school in opposition

to the innovating tendencies of what, for want of a better term, we may call the Catholic party.

But it would be very unfair to Tertullian, and his spiritual heirs the Novatians, to ignore as has been far too often done, the fact, that it was with them only a question of denying *ecclesiastical* pardon to heinous offenders. Narrow-minded perhaps they were, but they did not set limits to the mercy of God. Indeed they seem to have thought that it was for the eternal advantage of those who had fallen into mortal sin, not to allow of their restoration to the visible Church on earth. Upon this point Tertullian speaks with his usual clearness and straightforwardness.

He had been arguing, following as he believed the teaching of the Apostle John, that all sins were divisible into two classes, the remissible, and the irremissible, remissible that is, or irremissible by man, by the Church militant here in earth. Then he proceeds—"But it remains to examine specially, with regard to the position of adultery and fornication, to which class of sins they ought to be assigned. And before doing this, I will make short work with an objection which meets us from the opposite side, in reference to that species of repentance which we define as being without pardon. "If," say they, "there be a repentance which lacks pardon, it immediately follows that such repentance will be wholly unpractised by you. For nothing should be practised in vain. But in vain will repentance be practised, if it lack pardon. But all repentance should be practised. Let all repentance therefore obtain pardon, that it may not be exercised in vain : for practised it will not be, if it be practised in vain. And surely it will be practised in vain, if it lacks pardon." This then they contrive to make the ground of their

opposition to us, because they have wrongfully usurped¹ the power over this particular fruit of repentance, that is to say, over pardon. And I agree with them, that as far as they are concerned, such repentance is in vain, for it only obtains man's pardon: but as far as we are concerned, who remember that it is the Lord alone who concedes the pardon of mortal sins, repentance will not be exercised in vain. For this repentance having respect to the Lord alone, and lying prostrate before Him, will the more readily avail to win pardon, because it does thus beg it of Him only, because it does not believe that *man's* peace is adequate to its guilt, and because it prefers to blush with shame before the Church, rather than to enjoy her communion. For it stands before her doors, and by the example of its disgrace, both admonishes others, and enlists the tears of the brethren for itself, and returns laden with a richer merchandise than their communion, and that is their compassion. And if it reap not peace here below, it is sowing the seed of a rich harvest of peace with the Lord. It does not lose its fruit, but lays it up in store. It will not fail of the reward, if it fail not of the duty. Thus, neither is such repentance vain, nor is our discipline harsh. Both honour God. The one, by laying no flattering unction to itself, will the more readily obtain the Lord's pardon: the other by not assuming to itself a prerogative to which it has not a right, will the more effectually aid the penitent.'

Such is the statement of Tertullian's views in his own

¹ How very interesting it is to observe that Tertullian speaks of the power of ecclesiastical absolution for mortal sin as an usurped, and therefore a novel power, just in the same way that the Old Catholics of Germany now speak of Papal Infallibility as an usurped and novel power! The historical student will also observe with great interest, how the Catholic party in default of precedents to support their views fell back upon logic.

words. The thoughts which will probably be uppermost in many minds are very natural ones. Had he not some reason for the position which he assumed? And has he received altogether fair treatment from the ecclesiastical party of subsequent ages? It is not difficult to accept St. Jerome's statement, 'that he was driven into schism by the oppression of the Roman Clergy.' And there seems to have been none to plead for him, as the gentle Irenæus pleaded with Victor, on behalf of the Quartodeciman Churches of the East.

We are now in a position to analyse the opinions of the great parties and schools of thought which prevailed in the early Primitive Church. And unless we do this, its history will not be of much greater value than an inexhaustible storehouse of charming episodes.

In the first place then, there was the party of authority, the party which clearly looked to the Roman Church, and its President, as the depositary of that plenary power in heaven and earth, which was supposed to be given by Christ to St. Peter. And what is noteworthy is, that the party of authority was then, as it has been so often since, the party of innovation. What an unaccountable and gigantic illusion is involved in that oft repeated phrase—'the unchangeableness of the Catholic Church!' The more we study her History, the more we shall find that it is, to a very great extent, a history of innovations, and innovations not in discipline merely, but in doctrine also. And Rome has been ever the great innovator. That very principle of authority to which she was able, whether rightly or wrongly, to appeal, was ever her great support in all her innovations.

It would be well for the interests of the future union of the whole Christian Family if an earnest and able party, who have assumed the name of Old Catholics, could

be brought to realize this important fact, and face manfully the momentous issues which it involves. It is surely too late in the day for a really great School in the Church to take their stand at the year 1870, and say to the spirit of innovation—‘Hither shalt thou come and no further.’ Such an attempted policy can end in nothing else but disastrous failure, and ignominious defeat. From any such base of attack, Rome’s position is simply and absolutely unassailable. And history would tell the Old Catholics so, if they would study it as a whole, and not in sections and paragraphs. Rome in Anno Domini, 1870 is exactly where she was in Anno Domini, 200. The innovation of the doctrine of Papal Infallibility, which is at present the last, follows as naturally and inevitably as a series in geometrical progression, that which was probably not the first, but which is the first *recorded* innovation on her part—the promulgation of the doctrine of a second repentance, and restoration to Church communion for deadly sin after Baptism. The only difference is, that for the first innovation it was necessary to forge the Revelation of the *Pastor*, whilst the repetition of such a course for each succeeding innovation would have been inconvenient, if not impossible. Besides, Rome grew bolder, as well she might, with the lapse of ages. When the voice of opponents waxed ever feebler and feebler, and the assertions of the supremacy of St. Peter and his successors, ever stronger and stronger, what philosophic writer will be disposed too harshly to blame Rome, because she believed in herself, and in what she thought, mistakenly perhaps, to be her divine commission? Yes : let the Old Catholics learn, that if they would really reform the Church of Jesus Christ, they must go back to the primæval springs of her early history. There is no accepting the vast stream of tradition and Canon Law,

and Councils wrongly called Œcumenical,¹ for almost 1800 years, and then attempting to bar the further progress of such a mightily sweeping tide by the barrier, weaker than a gossamer web, of a protest against Papal Infallibility. The world and the Church move on, and the feeble voices of the protesters will soon be drowned in the roar of the advancing waters. What Tertullian and Luther failed in doing, Dr. Döllinger will certainly not accomplish, at least not from his present stand-point, nor with his existing leverage.

Luther began, like the Old Catholics, by a protest against one particular Papal innovation, but he soon abandoned that standing-ground for the far firmer foothold of a denial of all Roman claims whatsoever. And in so doing, he did good, but it was only partial good. In many respects, Luther affirmed undeniable truth, but it was only negative truth. His work was a great work, but it was destructive, not constructive. Hence, great as his work was, it only led to another schism, to another terrible rent in the seamless robe.

There are not a few indications that that constructive work which could not be done in the sixteenth century, may perchance, by the guiding of the Holy Paraclete, in Whom Tertullian believed, but which he, alas! conceived to be bestowed upon a small section of the Christian name, may be effected in the present and next succeeding generation.

And, as it cannot be too often repeated, that work, unless it would lead to another miserable schism, must be

¹ No Council after that of Nice can be looked upon as expressing spontaneously, and without prejudice, the mind of the whole Catholic Church. And even about Nicaea there are some suspicious circumstances which have never been examined as carefully as they ought to have been.

wholly and entirely a constructive work. There has been enough of demolition. The materials are at hand for reconstruction. The leaders of ecclesiastical literature, the guides of spiritual thought must make up their minds— (1) Whether, or not, any spiritual prerogatives whatever, in the Kingdom of God upon earth, were intended to be bestowed by the Divine Founder of the Catholic Church upon the Apostle St. Peter? (2) Whether, if the answer to this question should be in the affirmative, any, and which of those prerogatives were intended by the same Divine Person to descend to the Roman Church, and its representative for the time being? And if this too should receive an affirmative answer, (3) and most important of all, what is the due limit of such prerogatives, and what are the correlative and inalienable rights of the whole baptized Christian Family, which is the one and only true mystical Body of the Lord Jesus Christ, His one and undivided, neither Roman, Greek, nor Anglican, neither Episcopalian, nor Presbyterian, neither Papal, nor Protestant, but verily and indeed embracing all, His One, Holy, Catholic and Apostolic Church here on earth?

The day that sees these questions first fairly faced, and then answered, will see a second Pentecost, a Pentecost in no wise inferior to the first descent of the Blessed Paraclete, for this will be the Pentecost of the manhood, as that was the Pentecost of the infancy of the Catholic Church.

It is time now to turn to the consideration of the position of another great school in the Primitive Church.

We should observe at once, that these schools are constantly overlapping, so to say, each other. And as they commingle in fight, it is only after our eyes have become inured to the flashing of the weapons of the combatants,

that we can distinguish the opposing hosts one from the other. And especially hard is it to do this, when as often happens, one party assumes the discarded, or neglected armour of the other.

This is necessary to be premised, to explain the position of Tertullian and those who agreed with him, or were influenced by him. This party may be called, by an anachronism of language, but not of thought, the Protestant party. They form the Protestant school in the Early Church, because they, in the main, stoutly upheld the right of private judgment, because they not only claimed, but constantly exercised the right of interpreting the Scriptures for themselves.

And it does not alter the fact that such was the general direction of the stream of thought with this party, but only gives an additional interest to it, that cross currents are occasionally seen flowing directly athwart it. This is notably the case in Tertullian's controversy with the opposing school, the party of authority, upon this very question of granting the peace of the Church for sins of the flesh.

Few men who have ever lived have cared less for authority, if it were at variance with what he conceived to be the truth, than Tertullian did.¹ He constantly

¹ Thus see his decided language at the commencement of his Tract on the Veiling of Virgins. 'Proprium jam negotium passus meæ opinionis, virgines nostras velari oportere—hoc exigere veritatem, cui nemo præscribere potest, non spatium temporis, non patrocinia personarum, non privilegium regionum. Ex his enim fere consuetudo initium ab aliqua ignorantia, vel simplicitate sortita in usum per successionem corroboratur, et ita adversus veritatem vindicatur. Sed Dominus noster Christus *veritatem* Se, *non consuetudinem* cognominavit. Si semper Christus, et prior omnibus, æque veritas sempiterna et antiqua res. Hæreseis non tam novitas quam veritas revincit. Quodcunque adversus veritatem sapit, hoc erit hæresis, etiam vetus consuetudo.' Then shortly after, in words full of moral wisdom and

claimed the right to interpret Scripture for himself, and occasionally ventured upon deciding what was Scripture. Yet upon this grave question which we are now discussing, the two parties completely change their sides. Tertullian stands up for authority, for prescription and tradition. The party, which for want of a better name, we may call the Roman school, abandon all these, and shelter themselves behind passages of Scripture, interpreted according to their own private judgment. For though the Pope's decree, itself resting upon the pretended Revelation of Hermas, was clearly the immediate leverage, which effected the change in the Church's doctrine, yet the advocates of the change did not rely, ostensibly at least, at all upon the *Pastor*, and to a very slight extent upon the Papal Bull.¹

Indeed, the more we become at home in the history of

truth, which I translate, that none of my readers may miss their spiritual beauty. 'The Rule of Faith indeed is altogether one, alone immovable and irreformable, the rule, that is to say, of believing in one only God, Almighty, Maker of the world, and in His Son Jesus Christ, born of the Virgin Mary, crucified under Pontius Pilate, raised again the third day from the dead, received into heaven, Who sitteth now at the right hand of the Father, shall come to judge the quick and the dead, by the resurrection even of the flesh. This Rule of Faith abiding steadfast, all other things of discipline and conversation admit of the innovation of correction—the grace of God evermore operating and advancing, even unto the end.' True Eirenicon, wafted to us across the darkly swelling floods of the discords and crimes and hatreds and heart-burnings in the Christian Family, for almost seventeen centuries. Wherein is the want of a more elaborate Creed, if only there were with the simple Confession, the same true love to God and man, which prevailed, when the very heathen said, 'See how these Christians love one another?'

¹ Tertullian in the *De Pudicitia* does just touch upon the authority supposed to be derived from St. Peter, but that is all. This shows clearly that his Catholic adversaries could have said very little about it. This must have been, one would suppose, in consequence of its being felt to be a somewhat novel idea.

the Primitive Church and its controversies, the more clearly we shall see that the combatants were like the heroes in some Homeric fray. They were supremely indifferent to the nature of the weapons of which they made use—a stone, a spent lance from the other side, an arrow from an enemy's quiver, it was all one to them, all weapons were welcome, if only they promised to do execution.

It is not necessary to pursue this subject further, except to say, that if any one is interested in watching the working of the Protestant spirit, pure and simple, in the third century of Christianity, he should study the works of St. Cyprian. As long as Cyprian is contending on the same side as Rome against heretics and schismatics, the common foes of both, he comes down upon his adversaries, in the grandest style, with a crushing weight of authority. The moment there arises a difference of opinion between Rome and himself, so that the appeal to authority was no longer practicable, in that very moment he abandons the argument from authority, and entrenches himself behind his own interpretation of passages of Scripture. Chillingworth himself, in his famous *dictum*, 'The Bible and the Bible only the Religion of Protestants,' is not a more strenuous, practical advocate of what is called 'the right of private judgment,' than is this early Saint and Martyr, whose name occurs, in the Canon of the Mass, in such loving proximity with those of several of the early Bishops of Rome.¹

¹ See St. Cyprian's writings almost *passim*. But the Acts of the great Council of Carthage, which he assembled to decide upon the re-baptization controversy, and in which he presided, are very instructive. They are usually printed at the end of St. Cyprian's works. The Council consisted of seventy-seven bishops of Africa, Numidia, and Mauritania, with presbyters and deacons; and a vast number of the

It is perhaps a little uninteresting to turn from those mighty questions raised by the *Pastor* of Hermas which have influenced the Church of every age, and which must continue to influence her until the end of all things, to matters connected with the personal history of the writer, but they are necessary to complete his story. The further consideration of his remarkable work need not detain us long : and even so, after all that has been said, there is a rich harvest left to be reaped by any Scholars, who may care to examine it, in all its bearings upon the doctrine and discipline of the Primitive Church.

The most important question connected with the personal history of Hermas is, whether he were a presbyter or a layman? Tillemont, who argues stoutly, that he must have been a layman, because he was married, does not appear to have seen, that if it were contrary to the *later* discipline of the Roman Church for presbyters to marry, it was equally opposed to the same later discipline for laymen to preach. And Hermas tells us expressly, that he 'was sent to preach repentance.' The probability would seem to be, that he was not a priest, but a member, perhaps, of one of those semi-clerical Orders, or Guilds, which were very numerous in the Primitive Roman Church ; and which were probably the precursors of the Societies and Confraternities of later times, in which the

laity. They one and all, without a single exception, assert practically the 'Protestant right of private judgment,' in opposition to the authority of Rome, which does not seem to have weighed with them an atom, or a feather. And yet no schism, no irreparable breach with Rome ensued. Surely Rome was wiser, or milder, or something, in those days, than she has been in some of the ages since. If a historian may venture upon an opinion, it has been the passion for formulating dogma upon dogma, which has occasioned the change, and wrought the mischief.

devout laity, both men and women, have in every age of the Church loved to enrol themselves. Hermas appears to have been engaged in commerce, or in some kind of mercantile pursuit. The disorders in his own family, the probable immorality of his wife and sons appear to have weighed heavily upon his mind, and to have given him the first idea of writing the *Pastor*.¹ With what we have seen was the existing state of ecclesiastical discipline in the second century, he must have felt it to be something most terrible, that those nearest and dearest to him in the flesh could never be restored to the visible communion of the Church on earth. Hence he set himself to work out a milder system in connection with what is technically called the doctrine of Penance, and to reconcile his system, as well as he could, with the then generally accepted Apostolic traditions. And good reason, on the whole, has the Catholic Church to be thankful that he was led to do so.

The manner in which Hermas published his Treatise throws considerable light upon the constitution of the contemporary Roman Church.

He represents the supernatural visitant, who appeared to him, in his own house, as asking him, ‘if he had already given the Treatise to the Elders.’ He told her, ‘not as yet.’ Upon this she replied—that ‘he was to make out two copies. One of these he was to give to Clement, who was to communicate it to foreign Churches: the other to a person named Grapte,’ of whom all traces are lost in history. She was ‘to make it known to the widows and orphans.’ He himself was to read a third copy to the presbyters of the Church. This is the reading of the

¹ Lib. i. Vis. 1, § 3.

Greek, which is here preserved by Origen. The Latin has an important addition. There he is told, ‘to read it to the elders who preside over the Church;’ that is, over the local Roman Church.¹

All this is clear enough. If, as is as nearly certain as anything can be, the *Pastor* is a forgery of the middle of the second century, whose author, with the best of intentions, wished it to be looked upon as a work of the Apostolic Hermas, fifty years or so, earlier, he would make the external adjuncts of his literary venture as much in accordance with the age of the earlier Hermas as he knew how. Hence the introduction of Clement’s name. Still the writer would, to some extent, be influenced by the circumstances of his own age. And what makes the words just quoted of such priceless value to us is, that they shew us, as through a medium of transparent crystal, that the Roman Church, at least as late as A. D. 150, was still governed, or presided over by the College of Presbyters, and that their chairman, or president, or bishop was as yet a comparatively humble and unimportant personage. We seem to learn that a chief part of his office was still, as it was in the time of the real St. Clement, to keep up a correspondence with other Churches.

Thus the *Pastor* of Hermas accomplished its work; and whatever view may be taken of its doctrines a very great and important work it was, historically speaking. Then it fades entirely from our view. St. Jerome, speaking of his own times, writes thus about it: ‘The Apostle Paul

¹ ‘Tu autem leges in hac civitate cum senioribus (πρεσβυτέροις) qui præsunt ecclesiæ.’ Lib. i. Visio 1. In the oldest ecclesiastical Latin, πρεσβύτεροι seems to have been translated either by ‘seniores,’ or ‘majores natu.’ I am speaking of the second century. In the third century, ‘presbyteri’ was more frequently in use.

in his Epistle to the Romans makes mention of Hermas. Some assert that he is the Author of the book called the *Pastor*, which is still publicly read in some of the Greek Churches. It is a most useful work, and many of the ancient writers quote it ; but it is all but unknown amongst the Latins.' Thus St. Jerome. After this, it may be said, speaking metaphorically, to sleep with its author, its long sleep of ages in the Catacombs of Rome.

With a few remarks we may close this important Chapter of the History of the Catholic Church.

When, at the present day, we look forth over Christendom, we behold what is called technically the Sacrament of Penance spread abroad, as it were a mighty estuary, to which all episcopal or hierarchical Churches have contributed their affluents. At first it seems a task hopeless as well as Quixotic to endeavour to trace back this stream to its origin—as hopeless as it was once thought to discover the sources of the Nile. But by going back far enough through the mists of the ages that are past, our patience is rewarded ; and we come upon, as it were, a tiny rill, issuing from the Seven Hills of the Eternal City. No one marked its rise, except Tertullian, the greatest genius that has ever arisen in the Western Church. He tells us of those wonderful words, the strangest surely which ever came from human lips, words uttered in the Second Century, compared with which the dogma of Infallibility, promulgated as yesterday, is but child's play, words issued as an Edict, and affixed to the doors of the places of Christian assemblage—' I the Pontifex Maximus, I the Bishop of bishops, forgive the sins of adultery and fornication to those who have performed the appointed penance.' Here we come at last to the fountain-head of all human, or ecclesiastical pardon of sin. Tertullian

tried, as we have seen, to arrest the stream at its outset. He argued against it from Scripture, from authority, from precedent. It was all in vain. Rome was too strong for him then. She has always been too strong for her opponents in the ages since. She always will be too strong for them, until the whole Christian Family, the true priesthood of the Gospel Covenant, see that God has given them, in the last resort, the management of the affairs of His household, the Church, and that if they find that their rulers have betrayed their trust, they have full authority from the Divine Master to resume the power of government and discipline into their own hands.

Save in the recognition of this glorious truth, there is no real source of *ecclesiastical* authority short of Rome. This shows why all so-called reformations of the Church up to the present day have been such miserable failures. The truth that the Kingdom of Christ here on earth is a Kingdom because all its members are kings, as St. Peter says, has been forgotten: and an antagonistic theory has usurped its place. Thus Rome has become indissolubly connected with the advocacy and the defence of hierarchical views. And little as some may think it, all such things as the Commission to mortal priests to forgive sins, all pronunciations of the '*Absolvo te*,' rest ultimately, when we examine their foundations, upon the authority of Rome. High Anglican ideas upon such subjects are only faint scintillations, transient sparks from the great central Sun of the system, and that sun is now, as it ever has been, the Church and Bishop of the Romans. This is the great truth which will be acknowledged by all men some day, that if they are not satisfied with the Voice of THE CHRIST speaking to their own hearts and consciences, without the assurance of a mortal priest that

He does speak to them, then it is unwise to tarry at any half-way house, to linger with other hierarchies, either Greek, or Anglican. If they would have the principle of earthly and human ecclesiastical authority in its most potent form, they must go to Rome to obtain it.¹

¹ See Appendix C upon the early sources of information for gaining a knowledge of the subsequent history of the ecclesiastical Sacrament of Penance.

CHAPTER XV.

MONTANISM — PREDISPOSING CAUSES IN THE APOSTOLIC CHURCH.

MONTANISM seems to have been, at its outset, an attempt to solve the great problem of the true position of woman in the Church of the Lord Jesus Christ.

Montanism failed to solve it : and no attempt worth the name has been made in the ages since. And yet it seems strange, that woman should not have attained some recognised position in that Dispensation, in which Mary, the second Eve, gave Christ the second Adam to the world.

There are various indications, even in the Apostolic age, of the existence of those tendencies which, a century later, resulted in the great outburst of Montanism.

Written records and unwritten traditions both bear witness to the existence of such tendencies.

St. Luke, in the Acts, makes mention of the women who continued in prayer and supplication, waiting for the Descent of the Holy Ghost. Tradition places the Virgin Mary in the centre of the Apostles, when the tongues of fire sat upon the head of each. St. Peter applied Joel's predictions to show that it was to be a special glory of the Church of the New Covenant, that not only the sons, but 'the daughters' were to prophesy, that not only upon the servants, but upon the 'handmaidens,' God would pour out the special gifts of His Holy Spirit. For a considerable number of years, there is no intimation that

women were not to obtain the same recognised status in the official ministrations of the Church, which was enjoyed by the other sex.

Indeed the contrary would seem a more probable supposition. The four virgin daughters of Philip the Evangelist ‘prophesied;’¹ by which is meant that they proclaimed the Gospel in the assemblies of the faithful; and taught publicly, with the same authority as the prophets, who appear to have been looked upon, for a time at least, as holding the second rank among the ministers of the Church. Priscilla, as well as Aquila, instructed Apollos in the way of the Lord.

The denunciation of the woman called Jezebel, in the Epistle to the Church of Thyateira in the Apocalypse, does not seem to have been because she was a Prophetess, or a public teacher, but because she taught false doctrine.² The first intimation that women were to occupy a subordinate position in the Church comes to us in the Epistles of St. Paul. Indeed, what the Apostle says, is the only intimation which we have in the New Testament, that such was intended to be the case. And in laying down the rules which he did, we may conceive St. Paul to have been influenced, rather by the prevailing tone of later Hellenic thought upon such questions, than by the traditions of his own Hebrew ancestors.

Whatever were the cause, whether it were an anticipation, and a foreshadowing of the Incarnation, or for some other reason, women unquestionably took a much higher standing ground amongst the descendants of Abraham, than they did in any other ancient nation whatever, except perhaps the ancient Germans. Sarah herself, Miriam,

¹ Θυγατέρες παρθένοι τέσσαρες προφητεύουσαι. Acts xxi. 9. The Greek shows that their prophesying was *habitual*. The English Version is rather misleading.

² Rev. ii. 20.

Deborah, Huldah, Judith, Esther, the Mother of the Maccabees—all of them Jewish women—were patriots, prophetesses, heroines, martyrs, saints. No discordant note touching the inferiority of one sex to the other seems to be sounded all through the long line of their glorious annals. After all these prophetesses and teachers, these vessels filled with the Holy Ghost, both in the Old Testament and the New, it sounds almost like a painful discord in the harmonious swell of the concordant chant of men and women, to hear St. Paul, if he has not been misrepresented, which I firmly believe myself he has been, say, ‘I suffer not a woman to teach.’¹ ‘Let your wives keep silence in the Churches.’²

In reference to St. Paul’s teaching upon this particular point, taking the ordinary, and erroneous view of it, it is

¹ The Greek of this passage (1 Tim. ii. 12) should be carefully weighed. It will be then seen how little it tells in favour of the exclusion of women from the Christian Ministry.

² 1 Cor. xiv. 34, 35. Taking this passage as it stands, the English so-called Authorized Version is most unfair, and misleading. *Αἱ γυναῖκες ὑμῶν* does not mean ‘your women,’ but ‘your wives,’ and ought to have been so translated.

The context shows that *married* women only are referred to. The Translators, I am afraid, knew this, or else, why did they not render *τοὺς ἰδίους ἀνδρας ἐπερωτάωσαν*, in the next verse by, ‘let them ask their own men?’

But a comparison of this passage with xi. 3–16 of the same Epistle inclines me strongly to the belief that it is a forgery. And the forger has himself furnished us with the means of detecting his forgery, as is so often the case with these early interpolations. In his zeal against the female sex, he utterly forgot that St. Paul in the eleventh chapter had actually made provision for women to prophesy, that is to teach publicly in Christian assemblages. *Πᾶσα ἐξ γυνῆ προσευχομένη ἢ προφητεύουσα ἀκατακαλύπτω τῇ κεφαλῇ καταισχύνει τὴν κεφαλὴν ἑαυτῆς*, ver. 5. The Apostle places no other restriction upon women discharging the prophetic office, except the simple and natural one, that they should have a covering upon their head. And the fact of his enjoining the restriction, shows that, with the restriction, he approved of the practice.

of course very obvious to observe, that he was only one Apostle out of Fourteen, that he avowedly innovates upon previous usage, and most important of all, that he need not necessarily be understood as laying down rules for any other Churches except those which he was actually addressing at the time. It might be that St. Paul, with that great practical wisdom for which he was distinguished, perceived that for women to occupy any prominent public position in the Church would prejudice the minds of the Corinthians, or the Ephesians, with their degraded views of the dignity of womanhood, against the Gospel. St. Paul was perfectly well aware of the fact, with which we are familiar from classical writers, that it was all but impossible for any woman of pure moral life to take part in public affairs, whether political or religious, in Greece.¹ This shows, that in one most important feature, Hebrew civilization was purer, and therefore higher and grander than Greek culture. The latter might be a more perfect training for the sex which came under its influence, but the former embraced both the sexes.

If then we leave what St. Paul says out of our enquiry, as, perhaps, only intended to be applicable to the peculiar circumstances of a local Church, we shall find that the position of woman, in respect to the official ministrations of the word and sacraments, was left wholly undetermined

¹ See for example the passage in the noble Speech of Pericles. Thuc. ii. 45. *Εἰ δέ με δεῖ καὶ γυναικείας τι ἀρετῆς . . . μνησθῆναι, βραχεία παραινέσει ἅπαν σημανῶ. τῆς τε γὰρ ὑπαρχούσης φύσεως μὴ χεῖροσι γενέσθαι ὑμῖν μεγάλη ἡ δόξα, καὶ ἥς ἂν ἐπ' ἐλάχιστον ἀρετῆς πέρι ἢ ψόγου ἐν τοῖς ἄρσεσι κλέος ᾖ.* I believe that the truest and highest Christian philosophy would strongly demur to the "*ἅπαν*," at least. I need scarcely say that I am only speaking of the later aspect of Hellenic life. In the heroic ages of Greece the position of woman was very different. It came much nearer to her position among the Hebrews.

by the Apostolic Church, so far, that is, as its mind may be gathered from the Canonical Scriptures of the New Testament.

Our object is to trace how those germs of thoughts and ideas, which were undoubtedly familiar to the Pentecostal Church, though we have but slight historical indications of their presence, grew into the powerful and attractive system of Montanus.

The first thing which meets us, in the course of our investigation, is the beautiful and touching legend of St. Thekla.

Although there is no mention of Thekla in the New Testament, nor any allusion to her history, we cannot become familiar with the surviving records of the Primitive Church without being convinced, that there was an historical character of that name. At the same time we shall probably feel that, apart from the fact of her existence, there is scarcely a single circumstance recorded about her which rises into the domain of historical truth.

But history, to be worth the name, ought to be able to extract some grains of gold from the wildest legends, if only they are, in their main substance, of a comparatively early date.

CHAPTER XVI.

LEGEND OF SAINT THEKLA—ITS PROBABLE DATE—STRONG INDICATIONS OF MONTANIST INFLUENCE.

SAINT THEKLA's story then is as follows:—

Now Paul was going up to Iconium after he had fled from Antioch :¹ and his fellow-travellers were Demas and Hermogenes. These men were full of hypocrisy : and they made pretence unto Paul as though they loved him ; but they loved him not. But Paul having respect only unto the goodness of Christ, made himself gentle unto them, and loved them exceedingly. And he made the oracles of the Lord sweet unto them, teaching them both the Birth, and the Resurrection of the Beloved. And he told them the great things of Christ, how He had been manifested unto him.

And a certain man, whose name was Onesiphorus, having heard that Paul was coming to Iconium, went out to meet him, that he might bring him into his house. Now he had not seen Paul in the flesh ; but Titus had told him of him.

And Onesiphorus went along the road to Lystra,² looking for Paul among them that passed by. And when he saw Paul, he beheld a man small in stature, bald-

¹ See Acts xiv. 3. St. Paul 'abode a long time at Iconium ;' yet St. Luke only devotes a few words to the narrative of what he did there.

² Κατὰ τὴν βασιλικὴν ὁδὸν τὴν ἐπὶ Λύστραν. This seems to have been one of those highways which traversed Asia Minor, even in the remotest ages.

headed, of a good complexion, with eyebrows meeting,¹ and a countenance full of grace. For sometimes he appeared like a man, and sometimes he had, as it were, the face of an angel. And when Paul saw Onesiphorus, he smiled upon him. But Onesiphorus said—‘Hail servant of the blessed God.’ And Paul answered—‘Grace be with thee and with thy house.’ But Demas and Hermogenes were full of wrath and hypocrisy.

And when Paul was come into the house of Onesiphorus, there was great joy : and they bowed their knees, and brake bread.

And afterwards Paul preached the word unto them, saying : “ Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God : blessed are they that bear rule over themselves, for God shall speak with them ; blessed are they that have kept chaste their flesh, for they shall become the temple of God : blessed are they that have kept themselves apart from this world, for they shall be called righteous : blessed are they that have wives as though they had none, for they shall have God for their portion : blessed are they which retain the fear of God, for they shall become as the Angels of God : blessed are they that have kept the Baptism,² for they shall have rest with the Father and the Son : blessed are the merciful, for they shall obtain mercy ; and shall not behold the bitter day of judgment : blessed are the bodies of the virgins, for they shall be well pleasing unto God ; and they shall not lose the reward of their chastity : blessed are they that tremble at the words of God, for they shall receive consolation : blessed are they that are partakers of the wisdom of Jesus Christ, for they shall be called the sons of the Most High

¹ The Greek adds, *ἐπιρρινον*, having an aquiline nose.

² This expression is a plain indication of Montanist influence.

God : blessed are they, who for the love of Christ, are departed from conformity to this world, for they shall judge the angels, and shall be blessed at the right hand of the Father ; and they shall have rest for ever and ever.'

While Paul was thus speaking in the midst of the Church in the house of Onesiphorus, there was a certain virgin, called Thekla, the daughter of Theokleia, betrothed to a man whose name was Thamyris : and she sat at a window which was close by, listening attentively to Paul's discourse concerning virginity and prayer : and she gave earnest heed to the things which were spoken, rejoicing with all her heart. And when she saw many women going in to hear Paul, she also had an eager desire that she might be deemed worthy to stand in his presence, and to hear the word of Christ.¹

And when she came not away from the window, her mother sent for Thamyris, who came gladly, hoping then to receive her in marriage. And Theokleia said, ' I have strange things to bring to thine ears, O Thamyris ; for of a truth, for three days and three nights, Thekla riseth not from the window, neither to eat, nor to drink. But she looketh earnestly, as though she beheld a pleasant sight ; and she is devoted to this stranger teaching deceitfully, when a modest virgin ought rather to be ashamed. I tell thee, Thamyris, this man will overturn the city of the Iconians, and likewise thy Thekla, for all the women, and the young men are taught by him to fear God,² living in chastity. Moreover my daughter, glued to the window

¹ The Greek Acts have a curious addition here—Οὐδέπω γὰρ ἀκμὴν χαρακτηῖρα Παύλου ἑώρακει. Clark's English Translation refers this to Thekla not having seen Paul ; but I strongly suspect a corrupt MS., and that it was originally intended to mean that she had not yet seen Christ.

² The Acts have, ' One God.'

like a spider, looks eagerly for what is said by Paul, for she has been taken captive by his words.¹ But go thou near and speak to her, for she is betrothed unto thee to be thy wife.'

Then Thamyris went near; and kissed her and said, 'Thekla, my betrothed, why sittest thou thus? What strangeness is this, which has overpowered thee? Turn thee, my bride, to thine own betrothed.' Her mother also spake to her—'My child, wherefore sittest thou thus, looking down upon the ground, and answering nothing? Art thou beside thyself?' Then they all wept sore; Thamyris indeed for the loss of his wife, and Theokleia for the loss of her child, and the maidens for their mistress.

And there was great confusion in the house of mourning: but Thekla kept attending earnestly to the things which were spoken by Paul.

Then Thamyris started up, and went forth into the street of the city. And he watched those that went in and came out of the house of Onesiphorus. And he saw two men, striving bitterly one with the other: and he said, 'Tell me, I pray you, who is this that leadeth astray the souls of young men, and deceiveth virgins, so that they do not marry, but remain as they are? I promise to give you money, for I am one of the chief men of this city.' Now these men were Demas and Hermogenes. And they said unto Thamyris—'Who indeed he is, we know not; but this we know, that he deprives young men of wives, and maidens of husbands, saying unto them, that in no other way can they have a resurrection, than by polluting not

¹ The Greek adds—'Ἡ τοσαύτη αἰδῶς τῆς παρθένου χαλεπῶς ἐροχλεῖται. This, and one or two other things in the Acts look as if the Mother of Thekla suspected magical arts were being practised upon her daughter, for impure purposes.

the flesh, and by keeping it chaste.' And Thamyris said unto them—'Come into my house, and refresh yourselves.' And he made them a great feast in his house, and he gave them wine, and they drank.

And in his love for Thekla, and his desire to have her for his wife, Thamyris said to them at dinner—'O men, what is his teaching? Tell me that I may know; for I am distressed about Thekla, because she loveth this stranger, and she will not be my wife.'

Then said Demas and Hermogenes, 'Bring him before the governor, and charge him with persuading the multitudes to embrace this new doctrine of the Christians; and the governor will destroy him, and thou wilt have Thekla to thy wife. And we will teach thee that the resurrection, which this man speaks of has taken place already, for we rose again in our children,¹ and we rose again when we came to the knowledge of the true God.'

And Thamyris, hearing these things, was filled with wrath: and he rose up early and went to the house of Onesiphorus, with the rulers, and the officers, and a great multitude with staves, crying out—'Thou hast corrupted the city of the Iconians, and her that was betrothed to me, so that she will not be my wife. Now let us go to the governor Castelius.' And all the multitude said—'Away with the magician, for he has corrupted our women.'

Then Thamyris, standing before the judgment seat, said with a loud voice—'O Proconsul! this man, who, or what he is, we know not: but he makes maidens averse to marriage: let him declare therefore before thee, where-

¹ Whatever view we may take of these Acts, there can be but one opinion about the thoroughly independent way in which they treat every subject that arises—independent I mean of the present New Testament Canon.

fore he teaches these things.' The Proconsul called to Paul, and said—'Who art thou, and what dost thou teach? For they bring no small accusation against thee.' And Paul lifted up his voice and said—'Forasmuch as I am this day examined concerning what I teach, listen, O Proconsul! The living God, the God of retributions, He Who is a jealous God, a God Who is in need of nothing,¹ a God Who taketh thought for the salvation of men, hath sent me to reclaim them from uncleanness and corruption, from all pleasure, and from death, so that they may not sin.

'Wherefore also, God sent His own Son, Whom I preach unto you, teaching men that they should rest their hope on Him, Who alone hath had compassion upon a world that was led astray, that men may no longer be under condemnation, but that they may have faith, and the fear of God, and the knowledge of holiness, and the love of the truth. If I therefore teach that which has been revealed to me by God, wherein do I go astray?' And when the Proconsul had heard this, he ordered Paul to be bound, and to be put in ward.

'When I shall be at leisure,' said he, 'I will hear him more attentively.'

Then Thekla, by night, having taken off her bracelets, gave them to the keeper of the door: and he opened the door unto her, and she went into the prison. And she gave the jailor a silver mirror, and she went in, and sat at Paul's feet, and heard the wonderful works of God. And Paul was without fear, and ordered his life in the confidence of God. The faith of Thekla also was increased, and she kissed his bonds.

¹ Ἀπροσδέης. Cf Acts xvii. 25: οὐ προσδεόμενός τιος. That the Acts of Thekla should thus put a Pauline idea into St. Paul's speech, and yet express it in different phraseology from that used by St. Luke, is surely most significant.

Now Thekla was sought for by her friends, and Thamyris ran about the streets. And a slave informed him, that she had gone out of the house by night. And when they had examined the gate-keeper, he said to them, 'She has gone into the prison, to the foreigner.' And in the prison they found her, bound as it were with the chains of affection. And the friends of Thekla went forth from thence, and drew the multitudes together, and informed the governor. And the governor ordered Paul to be brought before him : but Thekla lay along upon the ground, in the place where Paul had taught her, in the prison : and the governor ordered her also to be brought before him. And she came, exulting with great joy. And the whole multitude, when Paul was brought, cried out vehemently, 'Away with the magician.' But the Proconsul listened willingly to Paul speaking about the holy works of Christ. And when he had taken counsel, he said unto Thekla—'Why dost thou not obey Thamyris, according to the law of the Iconians?' But she stood gazing earnestly at Paul. And when her mother saw that she gave no answer, she cried out, saying—'Burn the wretch : burn in the midst of the theatre her that will not marry, that all the women that have been taught by this stranger may be afraid.'

And the governor was greatly moved. And he scourged Paul, and cast him out of the city ; and he ordered Thekla to be burned. And immediately the governor went away to the theatre : and all the multitude came forth to behold the spectacle. But, as a lamb in the wilderness looketh round for its shepherd, so she looked round about for Paul. And gazing upon the multitude, she beheld the Lord, sitting in the likeness of Paul. And she said, 'Forasmuch as I am unable to endure my lot, lo ! Paul has come to see me : ' and He went up into heaven. Then the young men, and the virgins brought

wood, that Thekla might be burned. And she came to the place naked : and the governor wept, admiring the virtue which was in her.¹ And the executioners laid the wood in order, that she might go up upon the pile. And when she had made the sign of the cross,² she went up thereon, and the wood was kindled. Now, though a great fire was blazing, it hurt her not, for God had compassion upon her. And there was thunder underground, and a cloud, full of rain and hail, overshadowed her from above. And the rain, and the hail that were in the cloud, were poured out upon the fire, and many were in danger of death. Thus was Thekla delivered.

Now Paul was fasting with Onesiphorus and his wife and children, in a new tomb, on the way from Iconium to Daphne. And when several days were passed, the children said to Paul, ‘We are an hungered, and we cannot buy bread.’ Now Onesiphorus had left the things of the world, and had followed Paul, with all his house. And Paul took off his own cloak, and said—‘Go, my child, and buy bread.’ And when the child was gone to buy, he saw Thekla, their neighbour. And he was astonished, and said ‘Thekla, whither art thou going?’ And she answered, ‘I have been saved from the fire, and I am seeking Paul.’ The lad answered, ‘I will take thee to him : he is in distress concerning thee, and hath continued in prayer six days.’ And she stood beside the tomb where Paul knelt upon his knees, and prayed, saying—‘O our Saviour Christ, suffer not the fire to touch Thekla : but stand beside her, for she is Thine.’

¹ Τὴν δύναμιν τοῦ κάλλους αὐτῆς : The power of her beauty.

² This is the usual rendering of the Greek, ‘ποιησαμένη τὸν τύπον σταυροῦ.’ I feel rather disposed to think that what is meant is, that her arms were so stretched out, so as to make, undesignedly, the figure of a cross.

And Thekla stood behind Paul, and cried—‘I bless Thee, O Father, Who hast made heaven and earth, Who art the Father of Thy holy Son, that Thou hast delivered me, that I may behold Paul.’ And he, rising up, saw her and said—‘O God, Thou that knowest the heart, Thou Who art the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, I bless Thee, that Thou hast heard me, and hast granted speedily that which I desired.’

And they had with them five loaves, and herbs, and water. And they rejoiced in the holy works of Christ.¹ And Thekla said unto Paul,—‘I will cut my hair, and will follow thee whithersoever thou goest.’² But he answered—‘This is a shameless age, and thou art very fair. I fear lest another temptation come upon thee, worse than the first, and that thou withstand it not.’ Thekla said—‘Only make me a partaker of the seal that is in Christ, and temptation shall not touch me.’ Paul answered—‘O Thekla, wait with patience, and thou shalt possess the water.’

And Paul sent away Onesiphorus and all his house unto Iconium : but he himself took Thekla, and came to

¹ One MS. of the Greek Acts has a very interesting addition. *Καὶ ἦν ἔσω ἐν τῷ μνημείῳ ἀγάπη πολλή.* There was a great Agape, or Love-feast, within the tomb. I am inclined to think *ἀγάπη* is here used technically, as in St. Jude 12.

² Taking these Acts just as they stand, one of the most interesting points connected with them is, that it is evident that Thekla had, what is called fallen in love with St. Paul ; and that she was entirely unconscious of it, though the Apostle was aware of the true state of things. The question arises, was the writer of the Acts aware of it ? Who can tell ? If he were, and the work is one of pure fiction, we must allow that the relation of the maiden’s affection is most artistically managed.

If, on the other hand, the compiler of the Acts did not himself see how matters stood in this respect, it is strong collateral evidence of there being some substratum of truth in the legend.

Antioch. And as they were entering into the city, a certain ruler of the Syrians, Alexander by name, seeing Thekla, clave unto her in love, and would have given gifts and presents unto Paul. But he said, 'I know not this woman, of whom thou speakest, nor is she mine.' And Alexander embraced her in the street of the city. But she would not suffer it, and looking about for Paul, she cried out with a bitter cry, saying—'Do no violence to the stranger: do no violence to the servant of God. I am one of the chief persons of the Iconians; and because I would not marry Thamyris, I have been cast out of the city.' And she took hold of Alexander, and tore his cloak, and pulled off his crown; and he became a laughing-stock. And he, both because he loved her, and was ashamed of what had happened, brought her before the Governor. And she confessed that she had done these things; and the Governor condemned her to the wild beasts. And the women that were there, were struck with amazement: and they cried out—'Impious judgment! unrighteous judgment!' And she requested of the Governor, that she might remain pure, until she should fight with the wild beasts. And a certain woman named Tryphœna, whose daughter was dead, took her in charge: and she received consolation.

And when the Games were exhibited, they bound Thekla to a fierce lioness; and Tryphœna was with her. And when Thekla sat upon the lioness, the beast licked her feet. And the people marvelled greatly. And the title of her accusation was, '*Sacrilegious*.'¹ And the women cried out from above—'An impious sentence has been passed in this city.' After the Show, Tryphœna again

¹ Ἱερόσυλος. This word can scarcely be meant to be understood literally, unless, perhaps Alexander held some priestly office.

received Thekla.¹ For Tryphœna's daughter, Falconilla, was dead, and she had said to her mother in a dream—'Mother, thou shalt have this stranger, Thekla, in my stead, and she will pray for me, that I may be transferred to the place of the just.'²

¹ This was what was called '*libera custodia*.'

² There is a parallel passage to this in the Acts of Saints Perpetua and Felicitas, a document almost universally admitted to be not later than the beginning of the third century. Perpetua, a lady of Carthage, was in prison on account of being a Christian. In the dungeon she had a dream, in which she saw her brother, Dinocrates, coming out of a dark place, where there were many others, very hot and thirsty, his face dirty and pale, and the wound in his face, of which he had died. To proceed with what she saw in her dream, in her own words—'Dinocrates had been my brother in the flesh, who died when he was seven years old. The cause of his death was a cancer in the face, which had made him a horrible spectacle. There was in the place where I saw Dinocrates, a cistern full of water, but its lip was higher than the boy's stature, and he was standing on tip-toe, trying to drink. This caused me grief, that there was water, and yet my brother could not drink, because it was out of his reach. Then I awoke; and I knew that my brother was suffering. But I trusted that my supplications would be for his benefit; and I prayed for him all the time that we passed in the Castrensian dungeon.'

'And the day that we passed in the stocks, I had this vision. I beheld the place which I had seen dark, become full of light; and I saw Dinocrates, cool, with comely clothing, and with clean flesh. And where the wound had been, I saw only a scar. And the cistern which I had seen was as low as the child's waist. And there was a cup full of water upon the rim of the cistern, and Dinocrates drew near, and drank incessantly out of the cup; and when he had quenched his thirst sufficiently, he ran away, and began to play, after the manner of children. After this I awoke, and I knew that my brother was released from suffering.'

St. Augustine, who comments upon this dream of the lady Perpetua, saw that the obvious inference to be drawn from it was, that in the opinion of these early Christians, those who had died without baptism, might obtain its benefits through the prayers of their friends on earth, but as this was not in accordance with his own theory, he said that Dinocrates must have been baptized; and that he was suffering, in

Now when, after the Games, Tryphœna had received her, she was grieved because she had to fight with the beasts again, upon the morrow : and at the same time, loving her even as her own daughter, Falconilla, she said—‘Thekla, my second child, come and pray for my daughter, that she may live for ever : for this also I beheld in my sleep.’ And Thekla, tarrying not at all, lifted up her voice, and said—‘O Lord God, Who hast made the heaven and the earth, Son of the Most High, Lord Jesus Christ, grant unto this woman according to her desire, that her daughter Falconilla may live for ever.’ And when Thekla had thus spoken, Tryphœna was very sorrowful, for she lamented that such beauty should be thrown to the wild beasts.

And when the day began to break, Alexander came to fetch Thekla, for he it was that gave the Show ; and he said, ‘The Governor is ready, and the multitude is in an uproar : suffer me to take away her, who is to fight with the wild beasts.’ But Tryphœna cried aloud, so that Alexander fled away : for Tryphœna had said—‘A second mourning has come upon my house, there is neither child, for she is dead, nor kinsman, for I am a widow. O God of Thekla, help !’

And straightway the Governor sent an order that Thekla should be brought. And Tryphœna, holding her by the hand, spake thus—‘My daughter Falconilla, indeed,

consequence of some childish fault, committed after baptism. If Dinocrates had not been baptized, Augustine, or his system rather, would have placed the poor child, young as he was, in *hell*, for ever. But is it in the least likely that Dinocrates had been baptized, when Perpetua herself was unbaptized when she was thrown into prison ? However, even Augustine could scarcely have maintained that Falconilla had been baptized, and thus, in his view, a fitting object for Thekla's prayers. See Ruinart's note in *loc. Acta Sincera*, Ed. Ratisb. p. 141.

I took to the tomb, and thee, Thekla, I am taking to the wild beasts.' And Thekla wept very exceedingly, and said—'O Lord God, in Whom I have believed, to Whom I have fled for refuge, Thou Who didst deliver me from the fire, do thou grant a recompense to Tryphœna, who hath had compassion on Thy servant, and who hath kept me pure.' Then there arose a great tumult, and a cry of the people, and of the women sitting together. Some said—'Away with the *Sacrilegious*,' and others—'Let the city be raised against this wickedness. Cruel sight! evil sentence!'

And when Thekla had been taken out of the hand of Tryphœna, they stripped her of her garments, and a girdle was given to her, and she was thrown into the theatre. And lions, and bears; and a savage lioness were let loose against her: but the lioness ran, and lay down at her feet: and the multitude of the women cried aloud. And there ran also a bear against her: but the lioness went against the bear, and tore him in pieces. A lion also, which had been trained to fight against men, and which belonged to Alexander, ran upon Thekla: but the lioness met him, and they slew one another. And the women made great lamentation, because the lioness which protected Thekla was killed.

Then they sent in many wild beasts: and Thekla stood, stretching forth her hands in prayer. And it came to pass, that when she had ended her prayer, she turned and saw a trench, filled with water: and she said—'Now it is time for me to wash myself.' And she cast herself in, saying—'In the name of Jesus Christ,¹ I am baptized on my last day.' And when the women, and the multitude also, perceived what was being done, they wept saying—

¹ One MS. reads ἐν τῇ ὀνόματί σου ὦ Χριστὲ βαπτίζομαι.

‘Do not throw thyself into the water :’ the Governor also shed tears, lest the seals¹ should devour so much beauty. But she threw herself in, in the name of Jesus Christ. And the seals saw the glare of the fire of lightning, and floated about dead. And as she stood naked, there was a fiery cloud round about her, so that neither was she seen naked, neither could the wild beasts do her hurt.

And when other beasts were cast into the theatre, the women wept again. And some of them threw down sweet-smelling herbs, so that there was an abundance of perfumes. And all the wild beasts, even as though they had been restrained by sleep, touched her not.

Then Alexander said to the Governor : ‘I have bulls exceeding terrible, let her that is to fight with the wild beasts be bound unto them.’ But the Governor, looking very displeased, turned and said—‘Do what thou wilt.’ And they bound Thekla by the feet between the bulls. And they applied red-hot irons to the bulls, that they might be made the more fierce. The bulls therefore rushed about : but the burning flame consumed the ropes, and Thekla was, as though she had not been bound. But Tryphœna fainted as she stood beside the arena, and the multitude cried—‘Queen Tryphœna is dead.’ And the Governor put a stop to the Games ; and the city was sore perplexed. And Alexander said to the Governor—‘Have mercy both upon me, and upon the city, and release this woman. For if Cæsar hear of these things, he will destroy this city, because his kinswoman, Queen Tryphœna has died beside the Theatre.’²

¹ These were perhaps lampreys. The Greek has *φῶκαι*, sea-calves, seals. We may strongly suspect this to be an embellishment, due solely to the imagination of the writer.

² This is certainly one of the most curious portions of these Acts. The story of Tryphœna being a kinswoman of the Roman Emperor

And the Governor called for Thekla out of the midst of the wild beasts, and said unto her—‘Who art thou? And what hast thou about thee, that none of the wild beasts toucheth thee?’ And she answered—‘I indeed am a servant of the living God, and as to what there is about me, I have believed in the Son of God, in Whom God is well pleased: therefore hath not one of the beasts touched me. For He alone is the way of salvation, and the ground of immortal life. He is a refuge to the tempest-tossed, a solace to the afflicted, a shelter to them that are in despair; and once for all, whosoever shall not believe in Him shall not live eternally.’

And when the Governor had heard this, he commanded her garments to be brought, and to be put upon her. And Thekla said, ‘He that clothed me, when I was naked among the wild beasts, will in the day of Judgment, clothe thee with salvation.’ And she took the garments, and put them on. Then the Governor made a proclamation, saying—‘I release unto you the servant of God, the God-fearing Thekla.’ And the women crying aloud, with one voice gave thanks unto God, saying—‘There is one God, the God of Thekla.’ And the foundations of the Theatre were shaken with their voice.

Tryphœna also, having received the good tidings, went forth to meet the holy Thekla; and she said—‘Now I believe that the dead are raised.¹ Now I believe that my child liveth. Come into my house, and I shall give thee

would look like a pure invention. But then why introduce a falsehood, which would, at the time, be so easily capable of detection?

¹ I think this helps to explain what many in all ages have felt to be a difficulty—Why our Lord, when asked by the Sadducees for a proof of the Resurrection of the dead, proceeded to give evidence, not of the doctrine of the Resurrection, strictly speaking, but of the existence of the righteous after death.

all that is mine.' She therefore went in with her, and tarried eight days. And she instructed her in the word of God, so that most, even of the maid-servants, believed. And there was great joy in that house.

But Thekla kept desiring to see Paul ;¹ and it was told her, saying—'He is in Myra of Lycia.' And she took young men and maidens : and she girded herself. And when she had sewn a tunic, so as to make a man's cloak, she came to Lycia, and found Paul preaching the word of God. And Paul, beholding her, and the multitude that was with her, was astonished, supposing that some new trial was coming upon her. And when Thekla saw him, she said—'I have received the Baptism, O Paul ! For He that wrought together with thee for the Gospel, hath been effectual also with me, for the Baptism.' And Paul took her, and led her to the house of Hermæus, and heard all things from her, so that they which heard, wondered greatly, and received comfort. And they prayed over Tryphæna. And Thekla rose up and said—'I am going to Iconium.' And Paul said—'Go, and teach the word of God.' And Tryphæna sent her gold, and many garments, so that she gave Paul great gifts for the service of the poor.

And when she was come to Iconium, she went into the house of Onesiphorus. And she fell upon the pavement, where Paul was wont to sit and teach. And she wept, saying—'O God of myself, and of this house, where Thou didst make the light to shine upon me : O Christ Jesus, Son of the Living God, my help in the fire, my refuge among the wild beasts, Thou art glorified for ever. Amen.'

And she found her mother alive ; but Thamyris was

¹ Θεκλα Παῦλον ἐπέποθει. Another indication of her having, in all purity and unconsciousness, fallen in love with St. Paul.

dead. And she sent for her mother, and said—‘O my mother, canst thou believe that the Lord liveth in the heavens? If thou desirest wealth, God giveth it thee through me: or if thou desirest thy child, I am standing beside thee.’¹ And when she had thus testified, she departed to Seleucia.² And she dwelt in a cave, three score and twelve years, and she enlightened many by the word of God.³

This was the Passion of the first martyr of God, the Apostle and Virgin Thekla, who came from Iconium, when she was eighteen years old; and she lived in retirement in the mountain for other seventy-two years. And when she was ninety years old, the Lord took her. Thus was she perfected.

This is the very beautiful legend of St. Thekla, though not merely for its beauty has it found a place in this history, but because Montanism, in one of its aspects at least, could not be understood without it.

It is not at all necessary for us to enquire how much, or how little substratum of truth there may be in this legend of the Iconian maiden. As Baronius observes, the brief account given of St. Paul’s stay at Iconium, in the Acts of the Apostles, may well admit of much having happened, of which we possess no contemporary record.

And it may be added, that if we examine these Acts carefully, there is not one of the apparent miracles which is not easily explainable by natural causes. Indeed, a heathen, or a philosophic sceptic might relate her whole

¹ According to some copies, the mother continued obdurate and unbelieving to the last. She never forgave Thekla for not marrying.

² One MS. adds, that ‘she went into the tomb at Daphne,’ previously mentioned as the scene of the Love-feast, and there wept before God.

³ Πολλοὺς φωτίζουσα τῷ λόγῳ τοῦ Χριστοῦ.

history in a few lines. A young girl was condemned at Iconium to be burnt alive, apparently upon a charge of complicity in witchcraft. As soon as she had been placed upon the pyre, and the flames were beginning to seize the wood, a fearful tempest came on. Everybody, even the officers of justice, sought refuge from the storm in flight, and the girl escaped. After this, she wandered as far as Antioch, probably Antioch in Pisidia, where she is apprehended as a loose character; and according to the cruel habits of the age, is condemned to fight with wild beasts, in some public Games which were then going on in the amphitheatre. Here again, her good fortune did not desert her. Some of the beasts fought amongst themselves, and were too much occupied with their fury against each other to meddle with Thekla. Others were either lazy, or already satiated with food, and regarded her with indifference. And in her last and greatest peril, when she was being bound between two bulls, who would probably have rushed in opposite directions, and torn her limb from limb, the red hot irons, which were to have been used to render the bulls more furious, by some lucky accident came in contact with the rope which bound her, and Thekla was once more free. All these things combined, added to the poor girl's youth, and remarkable beauty, excited the compassion of the spectators, especially of the females; and they clamoured, as was common enough upon such occasions, that she should be released. The Proconsul, who seems to have been a humane man, and whose own heart was probably touched by the sight of all that had happened, readily complied, and the fair girl finally escaped.

The legend might be substantially true, and nothing more than this have really happened.

The long line of Greek and Latin Fathers, some of

them living within a comparatively short period of St. Thekla's supposed adventures, by whom she and they are mentioned, or alluded to, gives some countenance to the idea, that she was a real historical character. These Patristic testimonies will be found collected at great length in Baronius and Tillemont.

Our points of observation and interest are widely different. What we have to do is, to determine, as nearly as we can, the date when the legend was first compiled for publication to the Christian world of the Primitive Church.

To do this, we must examine both the external and the internal evidence. The former, so far as any real weight can be attached to it, is confined to a single passage of Tertullian.

‘But if any defend those things which have been rashly ascribed to Paul, under the example of Thekla, so as to give licence to women to teach and baptize, let them know, that the presbyter in Asia, who compiled that account, as it were under the title of Paul, accumulating of his own store, being convicted of what he had done, and confessing that he had done it out of love to Paul, was removed from his place. For how could it seem probable that he, who would not give any firm permission to a woman to learn, should grant to a female, power to teach and baptize.’¹

¹ The handling of this passage of Tertullian by editors and translators does not appear to me satisfactory. The ‘*perperam*,’ which I have rendered ‘rashly,’ has been usually translated, ‘falsely;’ I think without sufficient reason. When Tertullian says—‘*Quod si quæ Paulo perperam adscripta sunt, scriptum Teclæ (al. lect. exemplum Teclæ) ad licentiam mulierum docendi, tinguendique defendunt,*’ &c., it has, apparently, been taken for granted, that these *Acta* of Paul and Thekla were ascribed by the Asiatic presbyter to the Apostle, as though St. Paul himself had written them. To my mind, Tertullian's

If the editing, and the translating of this passage have been, for the most part, unsatisfactory enough, much more unsatisfactory have been the comments which have been made upon it.

It has been taken for granted, that the meaning is, that a presbyter of Asia, somewhere towards the end of the first century, compiled a History of St. Paul and Thekla; and instead of publishing it as a true narrative, either in his own name, or without any name at all, but in good faith, published it falsely, and therefore wickedly, under the name of the great Apostle, as though St. Paul were, himself, the writer : that he was convicted of this forgery, and deposed from the Priesthood. This account has been marvellously dressed up : and some of its advocates have ventured to say, that a Montanist writer of the name of Leucius was the real author of these Acts.¹ St. Jerome, commenting upon the passage of Tertullian, says, that ‘the presbyter who wrote the History of Paul and Thekla was deposed for what he had done by the Apostle St. John.’ Amid all this mass of confusion and perplexity it is not easy to get at the real truth. With regard to St. Jerome, it is necessary often to repeat, that he, a writer of the fifth century, is no authority for anything done in

words convey a very different meaning. I understand him to imply, that the *actions* related of Paul, in the *Scriptum*, or *Exemplum Teclæ*, were rashly ascribed to him, by the Author of the work : which is a very different thing. The passage is an obscure and difficult one, *even* for Tertullian.

¹ Tillemont with his usual diligence collects together everything that is known about this Leucius. ‘Ils, i.e. les Montanistes, se vantoient d’avoir esté animez et illuminez par un Leucius. Baronius le prend pour le célèbre auteur de tant d’actes fabuleux de Saints Apostres, à qui le Pape Gélase donne l’éloge de disciple du diable. Photius l’appelle Leucius Carinus, et témoigne qu’il avoit fait les Actes de S. Pierre, de S. Jean, de S. André, de S. Thomas et de S. Paul.’—*Mémoires*, tom. ii. p. 446.

the first, unless he quotes documentary evidence. In this instance he does rely upon Tertullian, to a certain extent. But he seems to have thought that the Author of these Acts lived in the first century, though there is no evidence upon this point, either in Tertullian, or anywhere else. Knowing therefore that St. John was still alive in Asia, Jerome jumped to the conclusion that it was he who had deposed the presbyter from his office.¹ This is the merest sample of the way in which the history of the Early Church has been written, both in ancient and modern times. And such assertions, unwarranted by the evidence, though put forward in all honesty, almost invariably meet us, the moment we come to examine the statements of Christian writers of the fourth and following centuries.

St. Jerome has been eagerly followed by others in still later times. They caught with avidity at the idea, that the nascent spirit of Montanism had been rebuked by the Apostle John. But their eagerness made them oblivious of the important fact, that according to their own view, as well as of their patron St. Jerome, what St. John condemned was not the *actions* of Paul and Thekla, which were supposed to give a countenance to Montanism, but the false assertion that St. Paul was the author of the *Acta*. It is very unfortunate for them, that Tertullian's words cannot be made to do duty, like a two-edged sword, in either direction—to condemn both the false authorship, as well as the *contents* of the book in question; but that cannot be. Tertullian's words might, perhaps, bear either construction. But we must, in criticising, elect which we prefer, and abide by the conse-

¹ What makes St. Jerome's conduct in this matter more inexcusable is, that he fathers the story of the deposition *by St. John* upon Tertullian, which is distinctly untrue.

quences. We cannot take up and lay down, first one theory, and then the other, just as we please.

It is long before our eyes become accustomed to the dim light, which is all we have to guide us in these far-off ages : but we have to be content. We must not expect certainty in these things : we must, for the most part, be content with verisimilitude. Bearing this in mind, I will give what appears to me to be a natural, common sense view of Tertullian's words. When he wrote them, he was a Catholic, and therefore, as a Catholic, he was horrified at the claim which had been set up, or rather renewed by the Montanists, for women to be allowed to teach and preach. And with his logical mind, he saw that if this claim were conceded, the right of women to administer Baptism, and perhaps other Church ordinances, would speedily follow.

This 'venom of the old Serpent,' as he calls it, was not working as yet : but he foresaw that it soon would : though little indeed did he imagine, that when a century or two should have elapsed, it would be the Catholic party, which permitted and defended the validity of Baptism given by women.

However, he set himself, by anticipation, to condemn the practice ; and this leads him to refer to what he calls the 'Book of Thekla.'

It is impossible to make more out of Tertullian's words than this—that a presbyter of Asia wrote an account of Paul and Thekla : calling it, apparently, by the name under which it has come down to us, *the Acts of Paul and Thekla* : that he had no wish to conceal what he had done, since he had written it out of love to the Apostle : but that his conduct was so displeasing to the dominant party in the Church at the time, that they degraded him from the Priesthood.

Everything beyond this is mere conjecture. And as in the absence of evidence, one hypothesis has as good right to be heard as another, I will proceed to state what I believe to be the true account of this transaction.

From early Apostolic times, there had been floating traditions of the wonderful conversion of a young lady of Iconium by the Apostle Paul, of her sufferings on behalf of the faith, of her miraculous escapes, and lastly of her zeal in propagating the Gospel, by teaching—it was presumed with Paul's sanction—the Word of God.

About a century after these events had happened, there arose the wonderful Montanist enthusiasm, in which women were supposed to teach and prophesy, just as Priscilla, and the four virgin daughters of Philip had done, not so very long before, in Apostolic times.

But between those days and these, the spirit of ecclesiasticism had enormously developed. Almost everywhere, there were Church officers, who bore the names of bishops, priests, and deacons. These men were gradually, but surely claiming the *sole* right of ruling the Church. They were beginning to assume the position of a grand hierarchical Order, with all its possibilities of good, but at the same time with all the jealousies, and a certain narrowness of view, which are, perhaps, inseparable from all earthly hierarchies.

Still, there was so much which was attractive in Montanism, so much which was, even on the very surface of things, in accordance with the entire spirit of the Christian Dispensation, especially if it were judged by the records preserved in the Acts of the Apostles, that it commended itself, not only to immense multitudes of the laity in Asia Minor and elsewhere, but to very many members of the official ministry itself. Countless presbyters, all over the world, were convinced of the claims of Priscilla and

Maximilla to be true prophetesses. They believed that the Lord had revived His work in the midst of the years, and had bestowed a fresh outpouring of the promised Paraclete.

One of these presbyters set himself to perform a very natural task—to gather together the floating traditions about Thekla, and her connection with St. Paul. He did it in all good faith, doubtless believing fully in what he wrote. At the same time, he was perfectly conscious that this traditional history was calculated to defend and maintain the Montanist theory. And the adversaries of the New Prophecy, as it was termed, felt this too, perhaps even more strongly. Hence they did what ecclesiastics have always done in every subsequent age, degraded him from the ministry. Notwithstanding its many noble qualities, there is one saying of St. Paul's, which the ecclesiastical spirit can never be expected to appreciate—‘Some indeed preach Christ, even of envy and strife; and some also of good-will. What then? Notwithstanding every way, whether in pretence, or in truth, Christ is preached; and I therein do rejoice, yea, and will rejoice.’

It is submitted that the above is a perfectly natural account of the compilation of the *Acts of Paul and Thekla*. They were not written in the first century, but in the second. They were written in the interest of Montanism, but were not a forgery, in the proper sense of the word. Their chief, if not their only fault was, that their Author did not use sufficient care in distinguishing fact from fiction. But he did not profess to have, what the Author of the *Pastor* laid claim to, a fresh Revelation from heaven.

If, as we clearly see, the tradition of St. John and the Robber was eagerly seized upon, and dressed up into the beautiful legend which we now possess, in order to support

the theory, that there was a *second* Baptism of Repentance, for the remission of sins, as soon as such a doctrine became necessary on account of the vast enlargement of the Catholic Church, it is by no means an extravagant hypothesis to suppose, that the traditions concerning Thekla were collected together, much about the same time, that is to say, somewhere about A.D. 160, or 170, in support of the right of women to teach, and prophesy, and perhaps to baptize.

Upon this theory there only remains to be shown a *probable* ground for the deposition of the writer of the Acts by the ecclesiastical party.

We may reasonably suppose them to have justified it by a discrepancy between certain supposed statements of St. Paul, found in his Epistles, such as—‘Let your wives keep silence in the Churches,’ and his encouragement to Thekla, when he said—‘Go and teach the word of God.’ This gave a colourable ground for the deposition of the Montanist presbyter. And it appears to be hinted at by Tertullian as the true cause of his degradation.

But, assuming for the sake of argument, that St. Paul used the words alleged to have been spoken to Thekla, there is no real discrepancy between them and the passage in the Epistle to the Corinthians. In the latter case, he is speaking of settled Christian Churches, where a regular ministry had been established. In the former case, he only gave encouragement to missionary efforts in places where, as yet, Christian Churches had not been formed: and certainly, St. Paul was, of all men in the world, the last to be displeased that people should be brought to the knowledge and love of Christ, even if it were effected through the instrumentality of the female sex.

But even though we should concede a discrepancy,

there is no cause for alarm. Few things have done more mischief than the supposed necessity of reconciling every separate act, and every separate utterance of every Apostle, not only with all his own acts and utterances, but even with all the acts and utterances of every other Apostle. St. Paul himself was never troubled about maintaining a conventional consistency where he believed the glory of God, and the good of souls were concerned. His spirit was a very grand one, and rose far above littlenesses of every kind. When he circumcised Timothy, whose father was a Greek, it is not very probable that he stopped to reflect, that he was exposing himself to the charge of a much graver violation of the spirit of the Council of Jerusalem than St. Peter was guilty of, when he rebuked him so sharply at Antioch. And even if such a thought had crossed his mind, we need not suppose that it would have influenced his conduct the weight of a feather.

So too we know quite enough of this great and blessed Apostle to feel, that if he were convinced that Thekla had a true call from above, to win souls to Christ, he would rise far superior to any such narrowness of mind as to forbid her, because he had happened to write to Timothy—‘I suffer not a woman to teach.’ Nor yet, on the other hand, if he saw that any local circumstances required the precept at Ephesus, would he for a moment hesitate to write as he did, because he had said to Thekla—‘Go and teach the word of God.’

It will indeed be a glorious day for the Catholic Church, when she too, can rise, like the great Apostle of the Gentiles, superior to the supposed necessities of conventional consistencies.

It remains to review the internal evidence furnished by the Acts themselves. This will determine nothing as to

who was their author ; but will be valuable in helping us to assign an approximate date.

Our attention should be directed to two points.

1. To the indications of antiquity.

2. To the traces of Montanist influence.

With regard to the first point ; one indication of the early origin of a Christian document is the absence of quotations from the New Testament. This peculiarity is not, by itself, sufficient to establish antiquity, but when taken in connection with other things it tends to do so. And the tendency of this negative evidence is greatly strengthened, when it is found in connection with sayings attributed to Christ, or the Apostles, which are not found in the Canonical Scriptures. The Acts of Thekla possess both these features. There is not a single direct citation from the New Testament : and when Paul preaches upon the Beatitudes, words are boldly put into his mouth, which are not in Scripture. This was becoming enough in a contemporary of the Apostle, or in a writer of the second century, who had received them through a not far distant tradition : but it would have been unbecoming in a writer of the third century, and, speaking in general terms, it was what writers of the third century seldom did.

But, how totally different with writers of the second age ! Clement of Rome gives us Parables of Christ, which are not related in the Four Evangelists ; and tells us that St. Paul was seven times in prison. Ignatius of Antioch gives particulars about the star which led the Magi to Bethlehem, which he did not learn from St. Matthew. Justin Martyr says, that our Lord was born in a cave. According to the Epistle of Barnabas, Christ said—‘ They that will to behold Me, and to touch My kingdom, must needs receive Me through tribulation and suffering.’

Papias preserved parables, and records of miracles which Apostles had related to him, but which a later age, in the exercise of the critical faculty, allowed to fall into oblivion. Polycarp of Smyrna gives many things which we have in substance in our Gospels, but which are at least as *verbally* different from them, as Matthew is from Luke. The Gospel of the Nazarenes, or the Gospel according to the Hebrews preserved, as long as it was extant, more independent materials for a complete account of the Life of Christ than the Gospel of St. Mark does, as compared with St. Matthew. The Epistle to Diognetus abounds in evidence, that the writer was familiar with Apostolic *oral*, or traditional preaching. It is all but void of indications that he was acquainted with Apostolic *writings*. The *Pastor* of Hermas takes a bolder flight, and professes to have received a direct revelation from Heaven. The Epistle of the Gallic Churches of Vienne and Lyons surely quotes from some unknown, Apocryphal source, when it says—‘The martyr Sanctus was made strong for his confession, who was bedewed and strengthened by the heavenly fountain of the water of life, which cometh forth from the bowels of Christ;’ or—‘Nothing is terrible, where is the love of the Father, nothing sorrowful where is the glory of Christ.’¹

Clement of Alexandria, amongst many other such like things, gives us the words of a conversation between Jesus and Salome. Tertullian cites as Divine Scripture—‘No one untempted shall attain to the celestial kingdom.’² He quotes an Apostolic Letter for the saying—

¹ Στεβρός πρὸς τὴν ὁμολογίαν, ὑπὸ τῆς οὐρανοῦ πηγῆς τοῦ ὕδατος τῆς ζωῆς τοῦ ἐξίοντος ἐκ τῆς νηδύος τοῦ Χριστοῦ ἔρροισζόμενος καὶ ἐνδυναμούμενος. And Ὅτι μηδὲν φοβερὸν ἔπου Πατὴρ ἀγαπῇ μηδὲ ἀλγεινὸν ἔπου Χριστοῦ δοῖα. Eus. II. E. v. 1.

² De Baptismo, c. 20.

‘There is one God, one baptism, one Church in the heavens.’ Even Irenæus has two wonderful parables of the Divine Master, quoted from Papias, which, fortunately, he did not, like Eusebius, think ‘too mythical’ to be preserved.¹

Thus then we see, that for a century, or a century and a half, the stream of knowledge about the Founder of Christianity and His personal followers flows, as we might naturally have expected, clear and full, outside the channel of the Canonical Scriptures. It was the great harvest of the ingathering of the Gentiles; and as it was in the natural harvest of Judæa, ‘Jordan overflowed all his banks.’ ‘Many took in hand,’ we may believe, in all love to Christ, in all honesty and good faith, ‘to set forth in order a declaration of those things which were most surely believed’ by Christians. And because in the Providence of God, it has happened that their works have perished, while St. Luke’s remain, it need not lessen our sense of obligation to that blessed Evangelist, that we view every fragment of information about Christ, with similar interest to that, with which we regard the rich stores which, for our everlasting benefit, he has provided for us in his Gospel.

It is not then a matter for surprise, but it is exactly what we might be prepared to expect, if the Acts of Thekla are, in the main, a document of the second century, that the writer should represent St. Paul, not only as saying—‘Blessed are the merciful, for they shall obtain mercy:’ but, ‘Blessed are they which have kept the

¹ Lib. v. c. 35. I have used the words ‘*even* Irenæus,’ because, on the whole, he was mainly instrumental in the origination of the theory, that the knowledge of the earthly life of Christ is to be derived from the Four Gospels only. Irenæus inclined to this idea in theory, but he was far from being a slave to it in practice.

Baptism, for they shall have rest with the Father and the Son.'

A further indication of the comparatively early date of this composition is its teaching the salvability of departed heathens. All primitive antiquity, as every one knows, believed in the efficacy of prayers for those who had fallen asleep in the faith of Christ. But it was only the first two centuries which taught that prayer was of avail for such as had died without Baptism, and without the knowledge of Christ on earth. It is not necessary to enter into the proof of this here. The attentive reader of this Work will have seen grounds for the statement brought before him from time to time. It is only necessary now to observe, that after the close of the second century, not only do we lose all trace of prayer for non-Christians who had departed this life, but we find the contrary opinion firmly maintained. So entirely was this the case that, as we have seen, St. Augustine, in order to get rid of the plain inference to be drawn from St. Perpetua's dream, and subsequent prayer for her brother, was driven to invent the ingenious, but scarcely amiable explanation, that a little child, who had died at the early age of seven years, was suffering purgatorial torments for some infantile fault committed *after* his baptism.

We may feel a reasonable confidence then, that whether the legend of Thekla be true or false, it was composed at least before A.D. 200. And this is some ground for supposing that the Acts of Thekla which we possess were the same as those to which Tertullian referred.

A third indication of an early date is to be found in the statement, that Thekla baptized herself, when she threw herself into the water. This is apart from any designed advocacy of the New Prophecy. We shall see abundant indications of Montanism presently. But, though

the claim of women's right to baptize others was one of the features of that movement, there was no question in the Primitive Church about self-baptization. If the legend were a pure invention, Thekla would not have been represented as baptizing herself; and if it had been a forgery of the third, or some later century, we know sufficient of the habits of thought of those times to feel sure, that if her baptism had been introduced at all, she would, in the absence of any Christian to officiate, have been represented as baptized by a heathen.

On the whole, we can feel no hesitation in assigning to this work a date, somewhere between A.D. 165 and A.D. 195. And most probably within a few years of the middle of that period.

Our next point of interest is to consider the evidences of Montanistic leanings, which these Acts contain. These are clear and abundant.

A bishop of the name of Basil of Seleucia, in the fourth century, is said to be the author of the Greek form of the Acts of Thekla, as we have them at present. This must mean that he re-edited them. There is not a shadow either of proof, or of probability, that he was the original writer of the work. Basil, as far as appears, had no Montanistic leanings: he would not therefore, had he been the author of the legend, have *introduced* anything savouring of Montanism. It were more probable that in his work of re-editing, he would expunge any too evident traces of Montanist authorship. This consideration may be of some help in determining the much debated questions—whether the Acts of Thekla, of which St. Jerome speaks, were the same as the work referred to by Tertullian, and whether the Acts which we have now are the same as those which were known in the fifth, the third, and the second centuries? The chief reason which

critics have for doubting whether we possess the original Acts, appears to be, that Tertullian, as we have seen, thought that they gave countenance to the usage of baptism by women. St. Jerome says, 'Thekla baptized a lion.' This he doubtless put invidiously; and what was probably stated in the Greek was, that she baptized a person of the name of *Leo*. But there is no direct statement in our present Acts of Thekla baptizing any one, except herself. How then are we to reconcile these discrepancies? Perhaps in this way—by supposing that Basil of Seleucia, whilst expunging everything which would be looked upon in his day as a direct statement of Montanist heresy, yet, either unconsciously, or more probably, deliberately left intact the more subtle and occult traces of Montanism. According to this hypothesis, Tertullian and Jerome would have the *Acts of Paul and Thekla*, as they were originally written by the presbyter of Asia, who was degraded by the party opposed to Montanus. We have the partially expurgated edition of Basil of Seleucia.

However this may be, the very title of these Acts, as they have come down to us, betrays at once their Montanist origin. Their heading in the Greek is, 'the Martyrdom of the holy and glorious Protomartyr and Apostle, Thekla.'¹ The Latin, whether it be a translation, or what we should rather call in modern times, an edition, has an even stronger savour of similar influences. It speaks of Thekla, 'as having discharged the office of

¹ Μαρτύριον τῆς ἁγίας καὶ ἐνδόξου πρωτομάρτυρος καὶ ἀποστόλου Θέκλας. The use of the two words μαρτύριον and πρωτομ. points to the comparatively early date of this title. The Acts which follow show that St. Thekla did not suffer death for the faith. This being so, we can scarcely suppose that she would be called a martyr, if her Acts were of later date than A.D. 200.

an Apostle.’¹ The direction in which this seems to point is, that even the Latin Version was made when Montanism was a living power in the Church ; and that the Translator, not wishing that the word Apostle, as applied to his heroine, should be taken by the Western world as a mere title of honour, gave it this turn—‘who discharged the office, or duty of an Apostle.’ The bearing of this is self-evident.

The title of Apostle, given to the Virgin Thekla, naturally recalls to the mind the words of St. Paul in the Epistle to the Romans. ‘Salute Andronicus and Junia, my kinsfolk, and my fellow-captives, who are of note among the Apostles, who were also in Christ before me.’

Whether this Junia were a woman, or not, is a matter of dispute. If she were, she is undoubtedly called an Apostle, and it is probable that she was united with Andronicus in evangelistic labours, in the same way that Priscilla, who is also mentioned in this 16th chapter of the Epistle to the Romans, was associated with her husband Aquila, and apparently upon equal terms.

The Greek Church does not seem to have taken unkindly to the idea of female Apostles. St. Chrysostom considers this Junia to have been a woman ; and is filled with admiration, that one of that sex should have been so happy as to share in the merit and rank of the Apostles. The Greek Martyrologies also honour her with the same title, calling both her and Andronicus, Apostles. They make her the companion of his travels, and give her a share in all the praises which they bestow upon him. And of Andronicus they say, that ‘he went through the whole world preaching Christ, exterminating errors, work-

¹ ‘Martyrium sanctæ et gloriosæ Protomartyris et apostolatu defunctæ virginis Theklæ.’

ing miracles.' And they entitle him, 'a priest¹ and victim both.' Origen, in his commentary on the Epistle to the Romans and elsewhere, calls her Julia, showing that he had no doubt about her sex.² Tillemont's assertion, borrowed from Ferrarius, that certain modern Greek authors place St. Junia's sphere of labours in Pontus, gives rise to the thought—Can there have been any connection between her history and Montanism? For we have good reason for believing that the Province of Pontus long continued to be one of the chief centres of the movement. It is not a little curious also, that it was in Pontus and Bithynia that Pliny, whilst saying nothing about bishops or presbyters, or clergy of the *male* sex, put Christian *female* ministers to the torture.

Such things as these, and many more which might be adduced, all point but in one possible direction, that it was by a kind of afterthought that the ministration of the word and sacraments was restricted to the male sex. This afterthought was embodied, not all at once, but by degrees, in the discipline of the Church: so that ages after the burial of Montanism proper, we find Councils still speaking of female presbyters. And here we come upon further evidence of the perpetual changes and innovations which have taken place in the Catholic Church. All these things bear witness to tremendous internal struggles and conflicts taking place within her bosom. And they are a testimony to what becomes ever clearer and clearer—the marvellous breadth and freedom of the early Primitive Church of the first two centuries; and

¹ Ἱερεὺς.

² I am indebted for these references to the unwearied diligence of Tillemont, tom. i. pp. 314, 315, Mém. Ecclés. Yet he concludes his notice of Junia rather amusingly by saying—'On croit néanmoins que c'est une faute.'

how hard a battle, the spirit of what we may call routine, or conventionalism, or ecclesiasticism had to fight, before it could narrow that breadth, and crush that freedom wherewith the Divine Son of Mary had enfranchised all his people, whether sons, or daughters of the Lord of Hosts.

A further evidence of Montanist, or to speak perhaps more technically, of non-Catholic influence, in the compilation of the Acts of St. Thekla is, her baptism, not in the Name of the Blessed Trinity, but in the Name of Jesus Christ.

This question of whether Baptism, which was conferred simply in the Name of Christ was held to be true and valid Christian Baptism by the Primitive Church, is one which cannot be said to have been treated satisfactorily by Theologians. If any orthodox Theologian, for now very many hundred years, was interrogated as to whether or not the Sacrament of Regeneration were conferred, unless the formula which makes use of the Three Sacred Names were employed, the reply would undoubtedly be in the negative. All Baptism which was not bestowed 'in the Name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Ghost' would be pronounced to be null and void. Yet there is a good deal of evidence tending to prove, that such a view is one more of those innumerable points, in which the Church of later ages has diverged from the Primitive Church. Both *formulae* were undoubtedly in use in early times. And, on the whole, the evidence shows that there was a large and influential school within the Catholic Church herself, which recognised the validity of the *formula* which employed the Name of Jesus, or of Christ only, or of both united. In every single instance in the New Testament in which Baptism is spoken

of as having been actually conferred, and the *formula* mentioned, it is in the Name of Jesus, or of Christ.

At the same time, Neander goes too far when he says, that 'the longer *formula* in the Name of the Trinity was perhaps not the oldest.' We can scarcely think that a form, and as far as we know, the only form which our Lord personally directed His Apostles to use, a form which Justin Martyr speaks of, as the one by which he had himself been dedicated to God,¹ probably before the middle of the second century, a form which so very early a heretic as Marcion disapproved of, showing thereby its use in the Catholic Church, should not have been occasionally employed, even from the first.

The probability is, that from the very beginning, both *formulae* were in constant use, and that the Primitive Church, with its wonderful breadth and liberality, allowed of both, and cheerfully admitted the full and equal validity of both. It has been later ecclesiasticism which has denied that Baptism, conferred in the Name of Christ, is Christian Baptism, that is to say, has affirmed the paradox, that it is not the Baptism of Christ.

St. Cyprian in this, as in several other things, appears to have been the great advocate and promoter of innovation.

It is not very easy to enter fully into his train of argument. But he seems to have allowed that *Jews* might be validly baptized in the Name of Christ.² And he argues against those Catholics who asserted, that 'a *heathen* bap-

¹ Apol. cap. 61.

² Illi, quia jam legis et Moysi antiquissimum baptismum fuerant adepti, in nomine quoque Jesu Christi erant baptizandi, secundum quod in Actis Apostolorum Petrus ad eos loquitur et dicit, Pœnitementi et baptizetur unusquisque vestrum in nomine Domini Jesu Christi.— Jesu Christi mentionem facit Petrus, non quasi Pater omitteretur, sed ut Patri quoque Filius adjungeretur. Ep. 73.

tized outside the Church, or even in opposition to the Church, anywhere, and in any manner, so that it was in the Name of Jesus Christ, would obtain remission of sins.' This position Cyprian of course denies in the most positive manner. I *think* the fair inference is, that he would not have ventured to deny the validity of Baptism in the Name of Jesus Christ, given by a priest in communion with the Catholic Church. He would, in all probability, have disliked the practice, and argued against it: but boldly to assert its invalidity is a later development of the spirit which gave birth to Canon Law.¹

The last and most important evidence in favour of the Montanist authorship of the Acts of St. Thekla is to be found in the words with which they conclude—'She illuminated many by the word of God.' The very early use of the term, *Illumination*, as a synonym for Baptism, is too well known to be dwelt upon. Basil of Seleucia, who is called the author of these Acts, but who, as we have seen, was only their editor, himself says, that the meaning is, that 'Thekla baptized those whom she converted to Christ.' Such a practice was allowed and encouraged by the Montanist party, probably everywhere, certainly in Asia. It is not material to our purpose just at present to consider, whether or not St. Thekla, or any other female of the Apostolic age, did actually baptize, but it is of the last importance to know, what

¹ I am far from wishing to speak dogmatically about St. Cyprian's views upon this point. The Epistle referred to, must be carefully read by those who wish to form an opinion of their own. St. Cyprian goes, as usual, entirely by his own private judgment of the meaning of Scripture. And in his zeal in favour of rebaptization, he seems to me to speak in a way about the Blessed Trinity, which would have got him into trouble, if he had lived a century later. I refer to the words—'Qua autem potestate consequi in baptismo,' &c.

was thought of such a practice by the two great schools, or parties in the Catholic Church of the latter half of the second century, and for a generation or two subsequent.

The Montanist party then, defended, with all their might, what they believed to be the ecclesiastical rights of women. The opposite party looked upon the assertion of such claims as portents worthy only of Antichrist, or even of Satan himself. Their object of course was, to narrow the breadth of the Church.

It is not in the least surprising that amongst the Montanists, women should baptize, since they had female bishops and female presbyters. St. Epiphanius gives a peculiarly interesting, though in some points, doubtless prejudiced account of one of their branches, or offshoots, the Pepuziani. 'They make use,' he says, 'of both the Old and New Testaments: and they believe in the Resurrection of the dead. Like the rest of the Phrygians, they acknowledge Priscilla and Quintilla as their leaders. Many foolish ideas and sayings are in circulation amongst them.¹ They are grateful to Eve, because she first ate of the tree of knowledge. And they say that the sister of Moses, who was a prophetess, is a warrant for their practice of placing women in the ranks of the clergy. They speak also of the four daughters of Philip, who were prophetesses. And frequently, in their churches, there walk in procession seven virgins, robed in white, bearing lamps,² who address the people, bewailing the misery of man, and by tears inciting to repentance.³ They have

¹ Φέρουσι δὲ μαρτυρίας πολλὰς ματαίας.

² This must have been a very pretty part of the Montanist ritual, and perhaps was the origin of those processions of white-robed maidens, bearing tapers, which are so common and so beautiful a sight in Catholic countries.

³ Δῆθεν ἐρχόμεναι, ἵνα προφητεύσωσι τῷ λαῷ. Epiphanius proceeds, speaking evidently, *ad invidiam*: Αἱ δὲ τὸν τρόπον τινα ἐνδεκνύμεναι

also female bishops and female presbyters, and in like manner females among the rest of the clergy. They say that there is no distinction, for in Christ there is neither male nor female. These are the peculiarities of the sect, which we have been able to discover.' Epiphanius, whilst strongly disapproving of a female episcopate and priesthood, evidently could not find scriptural arguments wherewith to combat the practice as readily as he would have wished; and so he says—'If they promote women¹ to the episcopate and the presbyterate, on account of Eve, let them listen to what the Lord saith: "Thy desire shall be to thy husband, and he shall rule over thee." ' Then, more to the purpose, he quotes St. Paul's words to Timothy—'I do not commit teaching to women, nor suffer them to take absolute authority over a husband into their own hands.'² For the man is not of the woman, but the woman of the man. And Adam was not deceived, but Eve, being deceived, was in the transgression.'

Then the Father winds up his whole account of these people with the remark, so natural to a monk and bishop—'O the vanity of this world, and its multiform errors.'³

This is what may be called the literary aspect of the female ministry of the Montanists.

In the celebrated letter of Firmilian of Cæsarea in Cappadocia, written to St. Cyprian in the middle of the

ἐνθουσιασμόν τοῖς παροῦσι λαοῖς ἀπάτην ἐργάζονται, κλαίειν τε ποιῶσι ὡς οἶκτον μετανοίας ἄγουσαι, δάκρυα χέόμεναι καὶ σχήματι τινι ἐποδυνόμεναι τὸν τῶν ἀνθρώπων βίον.

¹ 'Γυναικες,' which the Latin translator, needlessly, except as a sting, renders '*mulierculæ*.'

² This I believe to be the meaning of the Greek of 1 Tim. ii. 11. The English trans. seems to me not quite fair.

³ S. Epiph. Hæres. xxix. sive xlix.

third century, we find what a source of annoyance this female clergy was, in real life, to those prelates who were at that time diligently and laboriously building up the edifice of an exclusively male hierarchy.

Firmilian is supporting Cyprian in his great struggle against Pope Stephen, in maintaining that there could be so such thing as valid Christian Baptism, conferred by any persons who were external to what they were both agreed in regarding as the only Catholic Church.

To do this, Firmilian makes what he considers a *reductio ad absurdum*. He relates the history of a woman who had appeared in his own neighbourhood, and in his own time, and who had baptized multitudes of people. And then he asks triumphantly—‘Would Stephen recognise her baptisms?’ The narrative is not long, and it is so interesting for many reasons, that it is translated.

‘I wish to tell you something which happened amongst us, and which has a bearing upon this question. About two and twenty years ago, in the times which succeeded the reign of Alexander Severus, there were many commotions and great distress in this part of the world, which fell either to the lot of people in general, or were peculiar to Christians. There were many and frequent earthquakes. In Cappadocia and Pontus, several cities were entirely destroyed, the earth gaping, and swallowing them up in the depths beneath. And this was the cause of a grievous persecution against the Christian name, which, springing up altogether unexpectedly after so long a continuance of peace, fell upon our people with more terrible distress.

‘Serenianus was at that time the Governor in our Province, a bitter and grievous persecutor. Whilst the faithful were in this distress, and were fleeing hither and thither from fear of the persecution, and were leaving

their own country, and were migrating to other parts of the world, for they were able to do this, the persecution being a local one, and not extending over all the earth, suddenly there arose a certain woman, who, being in an ecstasy, proclaimed herself to be a prophetess, and acted as though she were filled with the Holy Ghost. She was, in reality, actuated by the influence of very powerful demons, so that for a long space of time, she excited and deceived the brotherhood, performing several wonderful and miraculous things, and promising that she would make the earth to move. Not that the power of the demon reaches to such an extent, as to be able, of himself, to move the earth, or to shake the elements, but because the evil spirit sometimes perceiving, and foreseeing that there will be an earthquake, pretends that he is going to do what he sees will be done.

‘By means of such falsehoods and boasts he had subdued the minds of all to be obedient to him in whatever he commanded, and to follow whithersoever he led them.

‘He also enabled that woman, in a severe winter, to walk with bare feet over rough snow, without being in any way troubled, or injured. She said that she was hastening to Judæa and Jerusalem, pretending that it was from thence she came.

‘The demon also deceived an unlettered presbyter, and one of the deacons, who both went astray after her.¹ But the cheat was, a little afterwards, exposed. There suddenly appeared before her one of the exorcists, a person of experience, who had always conducted himself

¹ The Latin is, ‘ut eidem mulieri commiscerentur.’ This I think, is one of the charges of immorality, which all theological parties in those days brought against their opponents: and which are seldom supported by evidence.

well with respect to religious discipline, who was also stirred up by the exhortation of very many of the brethren, who were themselves also strong, and of good report in the faith, to fight against and overthrow this wicked spirit, who had had the subtle craftiness to predict, a short time previously, that a certain adversary, and unbelieving tempter was coming. But that exorcist, inspired by the grace of God, bravely withstood him, and showed that he, who had before been thought to be a holy spirit, was a very wicked one. Now that woman, by means of the signs and falsehoods of the demon, had been accustomed to perpetrate many things, to deceive the faithful. Amongst other practices by which she had led very many astray, she had even ventured upon this—with the invocation which must not be contemned, she pretended to sanctify bread, and to celebrate the Eucharist, and offered sacrifice to the Lord, not without the sacrament of the customary preaching, and also baptized multitudes, employing the usual and legitimate words of interrogation, that nothing might seem to vary from the rule of the Church.

‘What then shall we say of such baptism as this, wherein a most wicked demon baptized, through the instrumentality of a woman? Will Stephen, and those who agree with him approve of it, especially, since neither the symbol of the Trinity, nor yet the lawful and ecclesiastical interrogation was wanting to it? Can it be believed that either remission of sins was given, or the saving regeneration of the laver of Baptism duly perfected, where everything was done by the devil, although with an appearance of reality? Unless, perhaps, those who defend the baptism of heretics will contend that the devil himself has conferred the grace of the new birth, in the Name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy

Ghost. It is the very deceitfulness of demons. The Holy Spirit is altogether absent from them.'

As Firmilian went on in his narrative, it is plain that his excitement increased. We can almost see the pen trembling in his hand with indignation. This however need not detain us. It is evident that the poor woman, who gives occasion to the use of such strong language, in which the devil's name is so liberally employed, was simply one of the Montanist bishops, or presbyters. If we had the Montanist account, it would doubtless give a very different version of the events which happened in those stormy times. But even from Firmilian we can see, that this female presbyter had a more than ordinary local reputation for spiritual gifts and sanctity. We need not suppose that she meant any harm. She traversed the wilds of Cappadocia, and the sharp, ice-bound crags of Mount Taurus, with bare feet among the snows, whilst the earth was rocking and reeling around her, engulfing cities and villages in the yawning chasms below, whilst a frightful persecution was raging, and the poor terror-stricken Christians were fleeing hither and thither, as sheep without a shepherd. Then she came from the earthly Zion of the Phrygian Christians, as they loved to call their little Pepuzium, to tell the Cappadocians of the heavenly Jerusalem, and to lead them thither, to baptize, to preach, to administer the holy Eucharist. This is what a Montanist would have said. And is it so absolutely certain, that when the great day of final account shall have come at last, this poor woman may not hear a very different sentence from that pronounced upon her by Bishop Firmilian? That she too may not hear from the heavenly Bishop, and the final Judge, the joyful words—'Well done, good and faithful servant, enter thou into the joy of thy Lord?'

The Bishop of Cæsarea, however, did not see things in this light. And we must not blame him too severely. It requires a greater largeness of heart than ecclesiastics are usually gifted with, to look on beyond the confines of earth and time, and see things as they will appear in the light of eternity.

The important point for us to notice, speaking historically, is the radical change which has taken place in the mind, so to speak, of the Catholic Church upon the subject of Baptism.

There are two things perfectly evident in Firmilian's letter. One is involved in the other. He dislikes exceedingly the idea of a woman preaching, and professing to celebrate the holy Eucharist, consecrating It with exactly the same rites as the Church. But he reserves the full vials of his wrath for her pretence, as he thought it, of administering the Sacrament of Baptism. And this was thoroughly in accordance with Firmilian's own feeling and theory, as well as those of the Catholic party generally, about Baptism. In this same letter, he speaks of it as the greatest of all the ways in which the *power* of the grace of God was manifested. If even Catholic Bishops were, at any time, and for any cause, cut off from the communion of the Church, all baptisms which they might administer during the time of their separation were simply null and void. If the persons whom such bishops baptized, subsequently submitted to the Catholic Church, they were, before admission, treated as heathens, and unconditionally rebaptized. So far was the Catholic party of those days, both in Asia and Africa, from admitting the truth of the modern theory that the ministerial acts of a real bishop, or priest, who is in schism, or is excommunicate, are *valid*, though he sins

in performing them. The whole theory of the Catholic Church, of her priesthood and Sacraments, as it was held by those primitive Fathers, was radically different from what it is now.

The centuries roll on, and bring their changes with them: but in nothing have they brought such changes and such innovations as in the Catholic Church.

The orthodox Bishop Firmilian, in the third century, looked upon the fact of a woman baptizing, as nothing more nor less than the demon himself pretending to do it, under the semblance of human instrumentality. In the nineteenth century, women baptize in all parts of the habitable globe, and their baptisms are held to be perfectly valid by the vast majority of the Catholic Church. In the great Roman communion, numbering 200 millions of Christian souls, women are instructed by its Ritual how duly to administer Baptism in cases of necessity. And yet the cry is repeated from mouth to mouth, until men come, at last, to believe it from the sheer force of repetition, that the Catholic Church is from age to age the same, unchanged and unchangeable for ever.

What has been quoted leads us to another question, upon which the Montanist female episcopate has an important bearing—the supposed transmission of Orders by means of the so-called Apostolical Succession.

It is doubtless, at first sight, somewhat startling to be made aware of the possibility of some, at least, of the prelates of modern Christendom, especially in that Eastern Church, for whose recognition of their Orders, Anglicans look so wistfully, being the spiritual descendants of Montanist female bishops. It is not in the world alone that facts are often found to be stranger than fiction. Even to the Church herself, the rule will sometimes apply.

The subject is so interesting that it is worth examination.

The Montanist Churches were so very similar, both in doctrine and discipline to the Catholic Churches, as even their bitterest enemies admit, that we may take it for granted that the ordinations, or consecrations of their ministers, would be similar likewise. Could we have been present at a Montanist ordination in the second, or third century, we should, in all probability, have witnessed much the same ceremonial, and heard similar prayers, to those which are described in the Eighth Book of the Apostolical Constitutions. The chief difference which would have struck us would have been, that female bishops and presbyters laid their hands also upon the heads of those who were thus solemnly set apart for the work of the official Ministry.

The words of St. Epiphanius wholly forbid our taking any other view. They absolutely exclude the idea, that in the Montanist Hierarchy, any prerogatives, or peculiar functions were reserved for the male sex. ‘There is *no* distinction.’ ‘In Christ Jesus there is neither male, nor female: all are one in Him.’

The next step in our enquiry is, under what conditions were the bishops and priests of the various sects admitted to the ministry of the Catholic Church in the third and fourth centuries? As far as we can tell, each Catholic bishop was, for the most part, left to his own judgment and discretion in the matter. At first, entirely so. Subsequently, many Councils were held in Asia Minor, in which rules were, to a certain extent, laid down for common action. Still, those who study the records of these obscure Synodical gatherings will find that their rulings were anything but uniform. This necessarily involved a wide discretionary power on the part of individuals.

Although no Montanist female bishop would, perhaps,¹ ever be admitted into the Hierarchy of the Catholic Church, yet we may feel perfectly certain that very many Montanist bishops of the other sex would, from time to time, be received with open arms.

This becomes as nearly certain as anything can be, when we call to mind that St. Basil the Great admitted two Encratite bishops to take their place amongst the bishops of the Catholic Church.²

¹ I say, 'perhaps,' because some evidence will be found later on, tending to show that female bishops were occasionally allowed to occupy Catholic Sees.

² The Canons, chiefly disciplinary, which go under the name of St. Basil, seem to me very hard to be understood. The Greek is not particularly difficult. But one Canon sometimes differs from another; and a Canon is, occasionally, self-contradictory. And the old Latin version often, and apparently without reason, differs from the Greek. They want a very careful examination, and re-editing.

The Greek of the Canon referred to above is, 'Οἶδα δὲ ὅτι τοὺς ἀδελφοὺς τοὺς περὶ Ζώιν καὶ Σατόρνινον ἀπ' ἐκείνης τῆς τάξεως προσδεξάμεθα εἰς τὴν καθέδραν τῶν ἐπισκόπων· ὥστε τοὺς τῷ τάγματι ἐκείνῳ συνημμένους οὐκέτι δύναμεθα διακρίνειν ἀπὸ τῆς ἐκκλησίας, οἷτε κανόνα τινα τῆς πρὸς αὐτοὺς κοινωνίας ἐκθέμενοι διὰ τῆς τῶν ἐπισκόπων παραδοχῆς. Can. I. S. Basil. Magn. Opp. pp. 21, 22.

It may be fancy, but it appears to me that there is a certain hesitancy to be detected in the Greek, not as to the statement of fact, but as to the expediency of what had been done, which disappears in the Latin version. 'Scio autem quod fratres Zoin et Saturninum, qui erant ex illorum ordine in episcoporum cathedram suscepimus. Quare eos qui illorum ordini conjuncti sunt, non amplius possumus ab ecclesia separare, utpote tanquam canone aliquo communionis cum ipsis edito per episcoporum susceptionem.'

The strange thing is, that what may be called the preamble to this Canon, is, apparently, at variance with the Canon itself. Εἰ δὲ ἐκεῖνοι φυλάσσουσι τὸ ἡμέτερον βάπτισμα τοῦτο ἡμᾶς μὴ δυσωπεῖτο· οὐ γὰρ ἀντιδιδόναι αὐτοῖς ὑπεύθυνοι χάριν ἐσμεν, ἀλλὰ δουλεύειν ἀκριβεῖς κανόνων.' I can only say that this would have led me to anticipate something very different from what follows: 'Παντὶ δὲ λόγῳ τυπωθήτω,

‘I know,’ he says, ‘that we have received the brethren, Zoïs and Saturninus, who belonged to that sect, (the Encratites) to episcopal chairs. Wherefore it is no longer in our power to separate from the Church those who are joined to that sect, forasmuch as there has been, as it were, a certain rule, or canon of communion with them, put forth by the reception of their bishops.’

Now let us bear in mind a few things—First, the frightful heresies of the Encratites, compared with the repeatedly acknowledged orthodoxy of the main body of the Montanists. In the next place, let it be remembered, that so numerous were the Montanists, that they are thought to have actually taken the place of the Catholic Church in some of the Provinces of Asia Minor,

τοὺς ἐπὶ τὸν βαπτισμὸν ἐκεῖνον προσερχομένους χρίεσθαι ὑπὸ τῶν πιστῶν δηλονότι, καὶ οὕτω προσίεναι τοῖς μυστηρίοις.’ In this case the Latin, except in one point, is an exact rendering of the Greek—‘Sin autem illi nostrum baptismum servant, hoc ne nobis ægre sit: neque enim illis gratiam reddere tenemur, sed canonum exactæ observationi servire. Omni autem ratione statuatur, ut qui *ex illorum baptismo* accedunt ungantur scilicet in fidelibus, et sic ad mysteria accedant.’ What can possibly be the meaning of the Latin translator rendering, ‘ἐπὶ τὸν βαπτισμὸν ἐκεῖνον,’ by ‘*ex illorum baptismo*,’ except that he did not know what to make out of the entire affair, for which I think he may be excused? The preface to the Canon would lead us to expect that the old Asiatic, or at least Cappadocian rule, was going to be enforced. Instead of that the Roman rule is laid down, of admitting heretics by the administration of the chrism.

Then again, the 47th Canon is very obscure, but on the whole it seems to mean that the *safest* plan was to rebaptize the Encratites, but that each Church might observe its own rule in the matter.

What is the way out of all this extraordinary tangle? I can see none, except to suppose that these Canons, so called of St. Basil, are really a collection of the Acts of different Councils, and of various dates, like the so-called Canons of Elvira, and that they have been all jumbled together by some ignorant, or careless compiler.

notably in Phrygia, and in so important a city as Thyateira.¹ Then we know that the way in which separatists were dealt with was left very much in the hands of each local Church. And when we take all these things into consideration, and view them as a connected whole, it is scarcely possible for us to be mistaken in believing that numbers of Montanist bishops of the male sex, but whose Orders had been derived to them through the female episcopate, must, from time to time, have been received, without re-ordination, into the Catholic Church, and that they kept their rank as bishops, or as St. Basil says, ‘were placed in episcopal chairs.’

The important bearing of all this upon the Anglican, and modern Catholic doctrine of Apostolical Succession through bishops will be obvious to every one.

My own study of the Canons and the History of this period, particularly of these Basilian Canons, leads me irresistibly to the conclusion, that the Catholic Churches, speaking generally, were much more ready to admit the Orders of heretics and sectarians, than they were their Baptism. That is to say, if, in any case, they admitted any sectaries without rebaptization, much more readily and cheerfully did they admit their bishops and priests without reordination. I do not say that this opinion cannot be shaken by a careful examination of all the Canons bearing upon the question, for above all things, we ought to learn to speak with moderation and diffidence upon subjects of such great difficulty: but I may say, that to establish a contrary conclusion will not be an easy task.

Altogether, it does seem that to make the continued

¹ Even Dr. Pusey allows this. See Notes to Tertullian. Oxf. Library of the Fathers, vol. x. pref. p. 8.

existence of the Catholic Church dependent upon the due performance, under certain arbitrary conditions, of a particular manual act, rather than upon the ever-abiding presence of the promised SPIRIT of the Living God is the wildest dream that the mind of man ever shadowed forth in its most fantastic imaginings.¹

¹ The utter irregularity with which heretical ordinations were frequently performed is strikingly shown by a passage of Tertullian, *De Præscript. Hæret. sub finem*: 'Ordinationes eorum temerariæ, leves, inconstantes. Nunc neophytos conlocant, nunc seculo obstrictos, nunc apostatas nostros, ut gloria eos obligent, quia veritate non possunt. Nusquam facilius proficitur, quam in castris rebellium, ubi ipsum esse illic, promereri est. Itaque alius hodie episcopus, cras alius: hodie diaconus, qui cras lector: hodie presbyter, qui cras laicus, nam et laicis sacerdotalia munera injungunt.'

Yet they were bishops of one of the most heretical of all the sects whom St. Basil the Great admitted to episcopal thrones in the Catholic Church, and said that it established a precedent, from which they could not, in future depart. After this, is it too much to hope that we have heard the last of Apostolical succession through bishops?

CHAPTER XVII.

MONTANISM—THE PERSONAL HISTORY OF THE LEADERS OF
THE MOVEMENT—MONTANUS—MAXIMILLA—PRISCILLA.

THE personal history of Montanus is not of so much importance as that of many leaders of intellectual and moral schools : still it must not be neglected.

The chronology of his life is very uncertain. Eusebius, as he is usually understood, assigns the rise of Montanism to, as nearly as possible, A.D. 167. St. Epiphanius places it nearly twenty years earlier.¹ This discrepancy will probably lead a thoughtful mind to the conclusion, that if we could know the real history of the sect, we should find that it was simply the embodiment of tendencies in the Catholic Church Herself, which had their origin in the Apostolic period of the first century. We are sure that the Apostles themselves were too wise and too good to condemn as heretics, any except those whose doctrines struck at the root of belief in the personal Christ, Who had come into the world in human flesh.

¹ Nothing can show more clearly the unreliability of the Fathers in the matter of dates than the chronology of Montanism. Tillemont, who enters into the question with his usual diligence, shows that St. Epiphanius gives three or four dates, from which to compute its rise. According to one of them, Montanism must have arisen in the first quarter of the second century, for he says that ninety-three years after the Death of Christ, or as early as A.D. 126, the whole Church of Thyateira was perverted to the Cataphrygian heresy. All this tends in the direction of confirming the conjecture in the text; of the origin of Montanist principles in the Apostolic age. See Tillemont: *Notes sur les Montanistes*, tom. ii. pp. 666, 667.

Almost as soon as the Apostle of love had left the earth, a party appears to have come into prominence, whose great object was to make the Catholic Church a grand ecclesiastical organization, with absolute uniformity of doctrine, uniformity of discipline, uniformity of government.

We are at present especially concerned with Montanus, who appears to have been a good, but perhaps somewhat narrow-minded man, whose reputation for sanctity probably led to his being put forward as the opponent of the scheme for reducing everything beneath the yoke of episcopacy,—a scheme which, if his Epistles be not interpolated may, perhaps, be traced to St. Ignatius of Antioch.

To arrive at the truth, we must compare all the various statements about Montanus, which are, it must be remembered, derived from his enemies. We shall find, fortunately for his reputation, that these statements are so conflicting as to be mutually self-destructive.

One of the charges brought against him is, that he was addicted to the sins of the flesh.¹ By other writers it is

¹ The principal authority for this and some other horrible stories is St. Cyril of Jerusalem. 'Montanus, that miserable man, filled with all uncleanness and lasciviousness. He fixed his abode at Pepuza, a most insignificant hamlet of Phrygia, falsely naming it Jerusalem. He cut the throats of wretched little children, and chopped them up into horrid food for the purpose of their so-called mysteries. Cat. Lect. xvi. § 8. Oxf. Trans. The value of Cyril's testimony for this horrible story may be estimated by the fact, that when he wrote, Montanus had been in his grave nearly two centuries. It is very awful to find Christians bringing such accusations against their brethren. If we may believe St. Jerome, Cyril's own character will not bear investigation.

The editor of the Oxford Trans. of St. Cyril, Dr. Newman, appends as a note to the accusations of this bishop of Jerusalem—'These charges against the Montanists are not satisfactorily borne out by other writers.' Dr. Newman might very safely have ventured upon a stronger condemnation, without any violation of Christian charity.

stated that he was a eunuch.¹ In such a case, we cannot be wrong in disbelieving both stories.

Again, one of the complaints urged with great bitterness and persistency by what, for the sake of convenience merely, we will call the Catholic party was, that the immense wealth of the Montanist prophetess Maximilla was employed in bribing the poor to embrace her opinions, and thus winning them over to her party. Opposed to this is the counter-accusation that Montanus and she *took* gifts even from the poor, and perverted religion into a kind of commercial speculation for their own pecuniary benefit.² It is not very difficult for Christian charity to pierce through this wretched calumny. The true state of things in all probability was, that Maximilla placed her private fortune at the disposal of the Montanist cause, and lived afterwards, as so many canonized Saints, both men and women have done since, upon the free-will offerings of a grateful and affectionate people.

Ecclesiastical history has for the most part been written under the impression that there was, in early times, one distinct organization called the Catholic Church—that it had clearly defined boundaries of doctrine and discipline, marking it off from all other bodies whatsoever—that, in fact, the state of things was closely analogous to what it is at the present day.

The careful and impartial student will soon discover

¹ St. Jerome endeavours to reconcile these two falsehoods with each other, by *conjecturing* that he made himself a eunuch, in consequence of his previous indulgences! *Credat Judæus!*

² Most of these charges are summed up in the following passage: Ὁ πρακτῆρας χορημάτων καταστήσας, ὁ ἐπ' ὀνόματι προσφορῶν τὴν δωροληψίαν ἐπιτεχνώμενος, ὁ σαλάρια χορηγῶν τοῖς κηρύσσουσιν αὐτοῦ τὸν λόγον. Apollon. ap. Eus. H. E. v. 18. Could anything but a spirit of infinite littleness have ever made such things a ground of accusation against a brother Christian?

that it would be impossible to make a greater mistake. He will find all things combining to show the unprejudiced enquirer that the tremendous struggles and conflicts which took place were, for the most part, *within* the bosom of the Catholic Church herself.

Eusebius naturally views the history of the second century from the stand-point of his own æra, when the ecclesiastical party had triumphed over their earlier opponents, and when other currents of opinion, and other schools of thought were coming into prominence, and acquiring influence. But even in the pages of Eusebius, uncritical and unphilosophical as he is, we may learn a good deal about the nature of these conflicts, and one thing we can discern very plainly: they were internal, not external struggles.

We can gather this from the two short chapters¹ in which he introduces his account of what he calls ‘the Phrygian heresy.’

‘As the enemy of the Church of God,’ he says, ‘is the hater of good, and the lover of evil, he anew energized in causing strange heresies to spring up against her. Of these were those which, after the manner of poison-darting serpents, crept over Asia, and Phrygia, boasting of the Paraclete Montanus, and of his two women, Priscilla and Maximilla, as though they had been the prophetesses of Montanus. And there were others which flourished at Rome, whose leader was Florinus, who fell away from the presbytery of the Church, and with whom was Blastus, who was involved in a similar fall. These men drew many of the Church over to their opinions, each attempting to introduce innovations concerning the truth.’

These are the very natural remarks of Eusebius. We

¹ H. E. v. 14, 15.

fortunately know from other sources, that the so-called Catholic party was the one which was chiefly responsible for the guilt of innovation, that is to say, if there were any guilt in the matter.

With respect to the hard names, 'heretics,' 'poisonous serpents,' 'venomous reptiles,' which Eusebius so freely bestows upon the Montanists, we must carefully examine his account of their early history, together with that of their supposed founders.

Eusebius, very honestly, almost always gives us the exact words of the documents to which he refers, a practice for which we can never be sufficiently thankful. And as soon as we come to examine them, we are simply lost in amazement at the frivolousness of the charges, which contemporary writers, the uncompromising enemies, be it carefully remembered, of Montanus, bring against him, and which are the sole foundation for the elegant title of 'venomous reptile,' bestowed upon him.

The only way to arrive at the knowledge of the truth is to examine the alleged facts. With the abuse we need not meddle.

'Against the before-mentioned heresy amongst the Phrygians,' says Eusebius, 'the Power which fights in defence of the truth, raised up a mighty antagonist in the person of Apollinarius of Hierapolis,¹ of whom our history has previously made mention. With him were associated many other eloquent men, whose remains furnish abundant materials for our purpose. One of these writers, in the commencement of his work against the

¹ Either Eusebius makes one of his customary, careless confusions between Apollinarius, Bishop of Hierapolis, and Apollonius, whom he calls an ecclesiastical writer: or else two persons, living about the same time, in the same district, and of nearly the same name took action against the Montanists. Cf. H. E. v. 16 with v. 18.

Montanists, shows in the first place how he had already attacked them by oral arguments. He says :

“ “A very considerable time ago, my beloved Avircius Marcellus, you enjoined me to write a book upon the heresy which is called after Miltiades, but I have been held back until the present time, not from inability to confute falsehood, and bear witness to the truth, but from a dread lest I might appear to some to write, or enjoin anything in addition to the word of the Gospel of the new Covenant, to which it is not possible to add anything, nor yet that anything should be taken away, by one who has determined to live according to the Gospel.¹

“ “ Being however lately at Ancyra in Galatia, and finding the Church there troubled with respect to this new prophecy, as its friends call it, but which is much rather, as will be shown, a false prophecy, I discoursed for several days in the church upon this and kindred topics to the best of my ability, the Lord assisting me. Thus was the Church made glad, and strengthened in the truth, and they of the contrary part were beaten down, and those that opposed themselves were put to grief. Then when the presbyters of Ancyra requested me, in the presence of our fellow presbyter Zoticus, of Otrenus,² to leave

¹ We may perhaps take this writer's apprehensions about himself to be well-founded, and commend his caution.

² Because Blondellus thinks that this Zoticus Otrenensis, whom Apollonius calls his *fellow-presbyter*, was the same Zoticus, who, in the same chapter of Eusebius (v. 16), is spoken of as a *bishop* from the village of Komana (ἐπίσκοπος ἀπὸ Κωμάρης κώμης), Bp. Pearson endeavours to prove that they were different persons. I should not have thought the question of any importance, except that Bp. Pearson is so earnest about it. (*Vindiciæ Ignat.*) Apollonius is thought to be a *presbyter*. And the episcopal theory seems to be this. Bishops in the Primitive Church, out of the exceeding depth of their humility and condescension, sometimes called presbyters their compresbyters: but the latter were perfectly well aware that this was a profound con-

them some memorial of what had been spoken against the adversaries of the truth, I did not accomplish this at the time, but promised to write to them as soon as possible, if the Lord should permit.

“The rise of these sectaries, and of this fresh rent in the Church had its origin thus. There is said to be a certain village in Mysia by Phrygia, called Ardaba; in which there was a recent convert of the name of Montanus. This was when Gratus was Proconsul of Asia. In the boundless desire of his soul to occupy a leading position, he gave the adversary an occasion against him. He was carried away by his spirit, and fell suddenly into a kind of ecstatic enthusiasm, in which he began to give utterances and to speak in strange tongues, prophesying in a manner contrary to the traditional custom which had prevailed in the Church from the beginning. As for those who happened to be present at the time, and heard these spurious utterances, some indeed were distressed, as though they were listening to a demoniac, to one who was possessed with a spirit of error, and was deceiving the people; and they rebuked him, and forbade him to speak, remembering the precept and the warning of the Lord, how he bade them be vigilant, and watch for the coming of false prophets. But there were others who rejoiced, as though what was done were of the Holy Ghost, and in accordance with a true prophetic gift.¹ These persons were not a little vainly puffed up. They were forgetful of the Lord's distinction. They made

descension on the part of their superiors, and therefore never presumed so far as to call bishops *their* fellow-presbyters. If the theory will hold water, I have no objection.

¹ Nothing could show more clearly than this hostile narrative does, that the Montanists were *within* the Catholic Church; and that the struggle between them, and their enemies was an internal conflict.

terms with this insane, hypocritical and deceitful spirit. They were flattered and seduced by him, so that he might no more be reduced to silence. By some such wicked and crafty artifice as this, the devil having contrived the perdition of those who gave heed to him, and being above measure honoured by them, both secretly stirred up, and inflamed the minds of those who were already steeped in the sleep of insensibility, and were wandering away from the true faith. Thus he even raised up two women, and so filled them with a spurious spirit, that, like Montanus himself, they spake ecstatically, and unseasonably, and in an unnatural manner. And some were glad, and made a boast of this: for the spirit blessed them, and puffed them up with the greatness of his promises. It is true that he did, occasionally, in a decided and sagacious manner, thoroughly condemn them, in order that he might appear to be a reproving spirit.¹ I should say that the few who were deceived were Phrygians. These, the same bold spirit taught to revile the whole Catholic Church which is under heaven, because the false spirit of prophecy received neither honour from it, nor entrance into it. For after the faithful, throughout Asia, had come together upon various occasions, and in many places about this matter, and had examined the new teaching, and pronounced it profane, they rejected the sect, and thrust it out of the Church, and deprived it of communion.”

This is an account of the rise of Montanism, given by a contemporary historian. The only remark which we

¹ "Εσθ' ὅπη δὲ καὶ κατακρίνοντος ἐπιστοχαστικῶς καὶ ἀξιολύτως αὐτοὺς ἀντικρυς, ἵνα καὶ ἐλεγκτικὸν εἶναι δοκῇ. As this was one of the charges brought against the Montanists, they might well have asked, as we may ask—'How was it possible to satisfy their enemies?' It is the old story of the wolf and the lamb, except that really the wolf behaved better to the lamb than the ecclesiastical party did to the Montanists.

need make is, that the harsh conduct of the so-called Catholic party appears to have had no justification whatever. The hierarchical spirit appears to be in all ages the same. Narrowness and exclusiveness are its watch-words. Everything must be done according to usage and precedent. Articles of religion, Acts of Uniformity, the rut of custom must regulate, even to the minutest details, the manner in which the gifts of the free and royal Spirit of God shall be exercised.

If any one will take the trouble to read the history of the movement inaugurated by John Wesley and the early companions of his labours, they will soon discover that they were treated by the lordly prelates of their day, in exactly the same manner as the poor and devout Montanists were treated in the second century.

But how different was the spirit of the Apostle Paul ; and in still more marked contrast was the spirit of the Apostle John, after he had learned, once and for ever, the lesson, that ‘ the Son of Man came down from heaven, not to destroy the lives and souls of men, but to save them.’

The perishing of almost all the Christian literature of the first half of the second century, necessarily compels an historian to speak with great caution : but I may at least express my conviction. And it is this—that there was a large party in the Church at this time, thoroughly orthodox in doctrine, which preserved and cherished the free and liberal spirit of Apostolic times, and which never gave place by subjection to the prelatic spirit of narrowness and exclusiveness, no not for an hour. These two schools, or parties struggled together, with varying success, within the bosom of the Church—the fiercer and more ardent members of each mutually banning and reviling one another—until at length, the æra of Constantine, and the

Council of Nicæa gave a final triumph to the ecclesiastical party.

And at the same time, we must never forget that all the while there were men, like St. Polycarp, Pope Anicetus, St. Irenæus, St. Dionysius of Alexandria, and others, who never meddled with this wretched strife amongst brethren, but still went on their own calm, loving, peaceful way, loving themselves, beloved of others, and only entering into controversy with those who would have destroyed Christianity itself, by attempting to destroy belief in a personal Christ, Who had come in the flesh.

To proceed with the contemporary account of the hostile historian of Montanism.

“ Since then, they have called us the slayers of the prophets, because we did not receive their discordant prophecies, alleging as they do, that these are they whom the Lord promised to send to His people, let them answer us, my friends, as in the presence of God, a few questions. Which of those is there, who began to prate from Montanus and his women, who has been either persecuted by the Jews, or slain by the lawless? Not one. Who of them has been seized and crucified for the Name of Jesus? Not one.¹ Which of their women has ever been either beaten, or stoned in the synagogues of the Jews? There has never been a single instance of such a thing. People do say that Montanus and Maximilla perished by a very different death. It is reported that urged on by their insane spirit, they made away with themselves, not both at the same time, but one at one time, the other at

¹ There is abundant proof that numbers of Montanists suffered death for the Name of Christ, at one time, or other, though the ecclesiastical party would not allow them the honourable title of martyrs.

another. Thus they went and hanged themselves, like Judas the traitor.

“In like manner it is a common opinion that a certain Theodotus, who was a very remarkable man amongst them, and who was a kind of first steward of their so-called prophecy, once, as he was being lifted up towards heaven in an ecstasy, having trusted himself to the spirit of deceit, was by him tossed up in the air like a quoit, and so miserably perished. This is the report.

“Since however we did not see these things for ourselves, my friend, we cannot be certain about them.¹ So perchance in this way, or perchance in some other, Montanus and Theodotus, and the aforesaid woman, are dead.’

‘He mentions in the same work, that the sacred bishops of that time made an attempt to refute the spirit which was in Maximilla, but were prevented by the opposite party, who manifestly co-operated with the spirit. Adding—

“And let not the spirit which spake through Maximilla, in the same account according to Asterius Urbanus, say, ‘I am chased as a wolf from among the sheep: and yet I am not a wolf. I am a word, and spirit and power.’

“Well, let her show clearly and prove her power in the spirit. And let her compel those who were then present, for the purpose of trying and interrogating the spirit which spake—I am referring to those good men and approved bishops, Zoticus of the village of Komana, and Julian of Apameia—I say, let her constrain them by the Spirit to acknowledge her. These are the men whose

² Ἀλλὰ μὴ ἄνευ τοῦ ἴδειν ἡμᾶς ἐπίστασθαί τι τῶν τοιούτων νομίζομεν. Eus. H. E. v. 16. Burton's Ed. In translating, I have given the writer the benefit of a possible doubt. But I *fear* he wished to convey the impression that he knew more than he really did.

mouths Themison and his party bridled, and would not suffer to rebuke the lying and deceitful spirit."

"The same author mentions the date of his writing against the Montanists: and speaks of those utterances of Maximilla, in which she foretold wars and seditions, as about to come. He proves her falsity by these words. "And is not this a manifest lie?" He says. "More than thirteen years have elapsed up to the present day, since the woman died, and there has been neither a partial, nor a universal war, but rather has there been continued peace to the Christians, through the mercy of God."'¹

These last charges against the much-reviled Maximilla deserve our attention.

In the first place, if every prophet who has uttered general predictions of coming wars and tumults were to be tied down to a period of thirteen years for the accomplishment of his prophecies, it may be feared that there are some of greater reputation than poor Maximilla, who would not stand the test.

In the second place, the whole account furnishes us with the completest evidence that even contemporary writers are not altogether trustworthy, when they write as partisans, or whenever theological prepossessions and prejudices, or religious enmities come strongly into play.

This Anti-Montanist writer, whose name is not certainly known, brings forward, as we have seen, the alleged fact of the Montanists not having been persecuted as a proof that they were not true Christian prophets and teachers. Then, in utter forgetfulness of what he had been saying,

¹ If any reliance can be placed upon this statement, it would make the æra of Maximilla to be some time in the reign of Antoninus Pius, probably as nearly as possible about A.D. 145.

he subsequently, in order to make a point against his adversaries, actually proceeds to declare that in the period which had elapsed between Maximilla, and the date of his book, there had been *no persecution of the Christians at all*. They had enjoyed profound and continued peace.

The world, and the enemies of Christianity might almost be justified in asking—‘What are we to believe, if such be the accounts which these Christians give us of one another?’

Whenever we find ourselves in circumstances such as these, there is perhaps only one safe rule of historical criticism to guide us. It is to distrust, or disbelieve everything that is said by a partisan in defamation of the character of his opponents, except such charges as are supported by other and impartial evidence, and those accusations which we may assume to be true by the confession of the accused themselves, recorded, or at least allowed, by their own writers.

Such a rule reduces our absolute knowledge of the early Catholic Church within comparatively small dimensions. But surely one grain of truth is better than mountains heaped upon mountains of error and falsehood.

The writer whom we are quoting proceeds with his attack.

‘When they have been confuted in everything else, and can find nothing to reply, they attempt to take refuge in their martyrs. They assert that they have many martyrs, and that this is an infallible proof of the power of the prophetic spirit of which they boast. But, as it happens, there is nothing less true than this. For some of the other sects have a vast number of martyrs; and yet we do not, upon that account, any the more agree with them, nor allow that they hold the truth. The followers of the

heresy of Marcion, who are called Marcionites, allege that they have very many martyrs of Christ, yet do they in no wise confess Christ Himself, in truth.

‘Hence it is, that whensoever any members of the Church, who have been called to martyrdom according to the true faith, meet with any so-called martyrs of the Phrygian heresy, they keep aloof from them, and not holding communion with them, are so made perfect. They do not wish to be associated with the spirit which spake through Montanus and the women. And that this is true, and happened in our own times at Apameia upon Mæander, in the instance of Caius and Alexander of Eumeneia, and their companions who suffered martyrdom, is well known.’

The meaning of this is that the writer drew a general conclusion from the very slenderest induction of particulars. It is especially worthy of note, that he allows the fact of Montanist martyrs, although he denies that they held the true faith.

The number of works published in Asia Minor against the Montanists during the latter half of the second century must have been immense. They have all perished, with the exception of the fragments preserved by Eusebius. Of the, perhaps, equally numerous Montanist replies, nothing has survived.

We are however able to discern the line of defence which they adopted. It was, that there had always been a school both of prophets and prophetesses in the Christian Church; and that Montanus and Maximilla were their legitimate successors. The ecclesiastical party did not attempt to deny the former part of this proposition; but they appear to have rejected Montanus and Maximilla on the ground, that there was something unusual in the way in which they delivered their utterances.

This seems clear from Miltiades, another Anti-Montanist writer to whom Eusebius refers.

This author gave quotations from the lost Montanist Apologies: and added—‘These things have I found in a treatise of theirs, in which they reply to a work of our brother Alkibiades, in which he proves that a prophet ought not to speak in an ecstasy.¹ Of this book I have made an epitome.’

The writer gives a catalogue of those who have prophesied under the New Covenant, amongst whom he reckons the prophetess Ammias and the prophet Quadratus. Then he adds,

‘But the false prophet speaks in an ecstasy, without fear, or bashfulness. He begins in voluntary ignorance, and ends in involuntary madness. They cannot show that any prophet, either under the Old Covenant, or the New, was thus carried away by the Spirit, either Agabus, or

¹ There is some extraordinary corruption, or confusion, designed, or undesigned in the text of Eusebius here: v. 17. Tillemont saw that there was a corruption, and suggests, that instead of our brother Alkibiades, we ought to read Miltiades. But this is by no means clear. We have seen that Eusebius speaks, v. 16, of a Miltiades who was so eminent amongst the Montanists, that the heresy, or at least a branch of it, was called after him. Then, in v. 3, he speaks of a leading Montanist in Phrygia, of the name of Alkibiades, whom he associates with Montanus himself, whether or not this Montanist Alkibiades be the same person as the Lyonnese martyr, of that name, as I strongly suspect him to be. Are we to suppose, as we must do, if the text of Eusebius is correct as it stands, that there were *two* famous persons of the name of Alkibiades, one a Catholic, and one a Montanist, both living at the same time, and also *two* famous Miltiades, one on each side? The only way that I can see out of this labyrinth is, to suppose that Eusebius has been utterly careless, and that what he should have said in v. 17 was, that Miltiades, a Catholic, found certain statements in a work written by the (Montanist) brother, Alkibiades, with reference to which, he, Miltiades, shows that a prophet ought not to speak in an ecstasy.

Judas, or Silas, or Philip's daughters, or Ammias in Philadelphia, or Quadratus. None of these acted like those of whom they boast.'

Again he urges :

'If, as they assert, the women who were associated with Montanus were the successors of Quadratus and Ammias in the gift of prophecy, let them show us, who among them are the successors of Montanus in the same gift? For it needs must, that the gift of prophecy shall exist in the whole Church until the perfect Appearing, as the Apostle testifies. But they have nothing to show up to this present time, fourteen years from the death of Maximilla.'

Montanism, however, like many other things, continued to thrive and multiply in spite of all the attacks which were made upon it, perhaps, if the truth were known, in some degree in consequence of those attacks.

An ecclesiastical writer, named Apollonius, afterwards entered the lists against the New Prophecy when it had developed into a powerful and attractive system—a great Christian school of doctrine and morals, within the Catholic Church herself, a School which counted its thousands of devoted adherents, in all lands, from the Orontes to the Rhone, from Carthage in the South to Milan in the North.

The most striking characteristic of all the attacks made upon the sect, is the utter frivolousness of the charges brought against them. This is equally true of what is said by their later, as well as by their earlier adversaries. Apollonius is no exception.

'Who,' he asks, 'is this new teacher? His works and his doctrine will tell us. This is he who taught the dissolution of marriage, who ordained fasts, who called Pepuza and Tymion, little cities of Phrygia, Jerusalem,

and desired men to gather together thither from all sides, who appointed stewards for money, who, under the name of offerings, contrived a method for receiving gifts, who provided salaries for those who preached his opinions, that his doctrine might prevail by the aid of gluttony. Then as for those prophetesses of his, as soon as they were filled with the Spirit, they left their husbands. How then dare they to utter the falsehood of calling Prisca a virgin?’

‘Again, do you not think that the whole of Scripture forbids a prophet to take gifts or money? When then I behold your prophetess receiving gold and silver and costly apparel, how can I fail to reject her?’

Then he attacks Themison, a Montanist confessor.

‘There is also that Themison of yours, who is clothed with a plausible covetousness, as with a cloak. He bore no sign of his confessorship, but slipped out of his chains by means of the abundance of his wealth. This ought to have made him humble-minded, instead of daring to boast as if he had been a martyr, and to imitate the Apostle by writing a Catholic epistle, presuming to instruct those whose faith was better than his own, striving for words of empty sound, and speaking impiously of the Lord, and the Apostles, and the holy Church.’

‘And to speak of but one more of your Confessors—Would your Prophetess tell us all about Alexander, who called himself a martyr? I mean the man with whom she used to feast, him to whom multitudes bow down, him whose robberies and other crimes there is no need for me to proclaim. Their record is in the Judge’s chamber. Who, I pray is it, which forgives the other his sins? Does the prophet give absolution to the martyr for his robberies, or does the martyr absolve the prophet from his covetousness? The Lord said—“Possess neither gold, nor silver, neither have two coats.” These men do the

exact opposite with regard to all such possession. I will prove that those whom they call prophets and martyrs, get gain not only from the rich, but from the poor, from widows and orphans.'

'We must try a prophet by his fruits: for a tree is known by its fruit. They then who wish to know about Alexander may learn that he was tried by Æmilius Frontinus, the Proconsul in Ephesus, not for the Name of Christ, but for the robberies which he had committed. Then, calling falsely upon the Name of the Lord, he was released, having practised deception upon the faithful in that city.¹ His own Parish, from whence he sprung, would not receive him, because he was a robber. Those who wish to learn these particulars respecting him have the public records of Asia to apply to. And yet your prophet Montanus associated with him for years, and was ignorant of his true character.² But we by showing what this man really was refute also the pretensions of your

¹ If Catholics should be desirous of proving that this Alexander is the same person whose extraordinary career is described by Lucian, it might be as well to remember that one result would be to show that Christian and Montanist were, in Asia Minor, convertible terms.

² Without being able to prove it, I have the strongest possible suspicion that this Alexander is the same who is mentioned in the Letter of the Christians of Vienne and Lyons. Eus. H. E. v. 1: 'A certain Alexander, a Phrygian by birth, but a physician by profession, who had resided for many years in Gaul, known to well nigh all men for his love to God, and his boldness in proclaiming the word, for he was not without a share in the Apostolic gift, ἦν γὰρ καὶ οὐκ ἄμειρος ἀποστολικῷ χαρίσματος. We know that there was a strong Montanist element amongst these martyrs and confessors. The less we believe of the accusations which Apollonius brings against *his* Alexander, the fewer the falsehoods to which we shall give credit. But if Alexander, a physician, and a layman, as he would be called by the hierarchical party, presumed to preach and exercise the Apostolic χάρισμα, we can understand the intensity of bitterness with which he is spoken of by the Catholic historian.

prophet. We could do this in many other ways. If they can stand the test of argument, let them abide the trial.'

'If they deny that their prophets have received gifts, then by the very fact of denial, they allow, in case we can prove the reception on their part, that they were no prophets. And I will give you ten thousand proofs that they have received gifts.

'But we must examine all the fruits of their prophet. Does a prophet, tell me, dye his hair? Does a prophet paint his eye-brows? Does a prophet love to adorn himself? Does a prophet play with tablets and dice? Does a prophet lend out money at interest? Let them first confess whether these things are lawful, or no: I will then prove that they have been done by them.'

Next to the utter frivolousness of every charge but one, made by this ecclesiastical writer, the most noticeable feature of his attack is the spirit of envy, hatred, malice and all uncharitableness which evidently guides his pen. It is most sad to see how soon vast multitudes in the Catholic Church forgot, or despised, the Master's teaching, to love one another. What the Montanists said in answer we do not know. Their replies have perished. Or they may have thought well not to reply at all, except by increased zeal in the cause of Christ, and by a more fervent love to all men. We have seen what were the abundant labours of a Montanist female bishop in the province of Cappadocia, a few years later on—labours which Firmilian ascribed to Satan, for no other reason apparently than that she did not belong to his own narrow party, which, like his successors and imitators in every age, he called the Catholic Church. It might be so. But it was only, at the best, man's Catholic Church. God's Catholic Church is something very different. God's Catholic Church on earth, as in heaven, embraces and

includes all who love and believe in a personal Christ: a Christ, Who is the very Son of Mary, and the very Son of God.

But although the work of Apollonius will never take rank as a manifestation of Christian charity, it is useful in a chronological point of view.

He wrote, according to a statement which he makes himself, about forty years after Montanus began to prophecy. This would bring him very near to the close of the second century, and make him a contemporary of Tertullian and Irenæus, of Clement of Alexandria and Victor of Rome.

In the midst of his bitter invectives he gives a curious incidental, and evidently undesigned proof of the wonderful gentleness of the Montanists towards their opponents.

He tells us that the village bishop, Zoticus, of whom mention has been made before, upon one occasion actually penetrated into Pepyza, the Zion of the Montanists, and had the daring effrontery to attempt to exorcise Maximilla, as though she were possessed by a devil. He adds, that 'those who followed her opinions would not allow him to do so.' The way in which Apollonius tells the tale is sufficient to convince us that the inhabitants of Pepyza, acting in a quiet and orderly manner, would not allow so gross an insult to be put upon their beloved prophetess.

Eusebius concludes his account by a few scattered notices, which show how widely Montanism was spread by the end of the second century. We can scarcely be wrong in thinking that wherever the visible Catholic Church herself was found, there too was Montanism, as a school or order within her bosom, beloved and revered by some, hated and persecuted by others.

Serapion of Antioch writes against it, so does Claudius Apollinarius of Hierapolis.

Publius Julius, bishop of the Roman colony of Debel-tum shows, in the following remarkable words, that the Montanist prophetess Prisca, or Priscilla, must have travelled as far as Greece and Thrace in her missionary journeys.

‘As sure as God lives in heaven, the blessed Sotas, in Anchialus wished to cast out the demon from Priscilla, and the hypocrites would not allow him.’

All these things help us to gain a very fair knowledge of Montanism and its adherents, and so to become at home in a chapter of history, than which there is none more interesting, or more important in the records of the whole Catholic Church.

CHAPTER XVIII.

LATER HISTORY OF MONTANISM—EXAMINATION OF THE CHARGES BROUGHT AGAINST IT BY ITS OPPONENTS—INFLUENCE UPON THE DOCTRINE AND DISCIPLINE OF THE CHURCH—AND UPON THE CANON OF SCRIPTURE.

FOR the later history of Montanism, and for an exposition and defence of its principles, we must turn to the works of Tertullian. It is from him we learn that remarkable episode in which a bishop of Rome, towards the close of the second century, comes into contact with the New Prophecy.

This was a transaction, for which, whatever we may think of it, the Montanists, of all parties concerned, had least occasion to blush.

Praxeas, like the followers of the illustrious Emmanuel Swedenborg, appears to have held that the whole Godhead of the Three Persons of the Blessed Trinity was absolutely identical with the One Person of God the Son. In other words, that there was but one Person as well as one Substance of Godhead. Thus the Person of the Father and the Person of the Holy Ghost existed in nothing else save the name.

Praxeas came from Asia to Rome about the time of Pope Victor. Whether he then held and avowed his peculiar tenets we do not know. Probably not. However he changed the whole subsequent history and fate of Montanism.¹

¹ Tertull. advers. Prax. c. I.

The bishop of Rome was, at that time, preparing to acknowledge the genuineness of the prophecies of Montanus, Prisca and Maximilla, and, as a consequence of such recognition, to grant peace to the churches of Asia and Phrygia.¹

‘Praxeas, by urging false accusations against their prophets and churches, and by pleading the authority of the Pope’s predecessors, forced him to recall the letters of communion after they had been issued, and to recede

¹ Roman Catholics have some cause to complain of the translation of this passage of Tertullian in Messrs. Clark’s Ante-Nicene Library. The Latin is—‘Idem, sc. Praxeas, Episcopum Romanum, *agnoscentem* jam prophetias Montani, Priscæ, Maximillæ, et ex ea agnitione pacem ecclesiis Asiæ et Phrygiæ *inferentem*—coegit et literas pacis revocare jam emissas, et a *proposito recipiendorum* charismatum concessare.’ This is rendered—‘After the Bishop of Rome had acknowledged the prophetic gifts of Montanus, Prisca and Maximilla, and in consequence of the acknowledgment had bestowed his peace upon the Churches of Asia and Phrygia—he compelled him to recall the pacific letter which he had issued, as well as to desist from his purpose of acknowledging the said gifts.’ But it is too strong a tense to render *agnoscentem* by ‘had acknowledged,’ and *pacem inferentem* by ‘had bestowed his peace.’ Viewing the whole passage carefully, it is clear that the Pope’s action in the matter was not absolutely irrevocable. He had very nearly, but not irrecoverably, committed himself. His ‘letter of peace’ seems to have been written, and perhaps given into the hands of the messenger, and then recalled, before it had reached Asia Minor. The whole transaction, of which the passage in Tertullian preserves the record, is sufficiently embarrassing for the advocates of the modern doctrine of Papal Infallibility, without worse being made of it. At the same time it is right to observe, that the inaccuracy in Messrs. Clark’s Translation is due to nothing beyond a slight inadvertence. This is shown by their rendering of *literas pacis*, ‘a pacific letter.’ It would have fairly borne a much stronger term. It means admission to communion, that is to say, the recognition of the Montanists as members of the Catholic Church. If we knew the exact circumstances to which Tertullian refers in the words, *jam emissas*, we should be in a position to say how far the Pope had committed himself. But as we do not, it is only the part of fairness and candour to give him the benefit of the doubt.

from his intention of recognising the truth of the prophetic gifts.' Then Tertullian proceeds to denounce the heresy of Praxeas, in his own peculiarly graphic manner. 'Thus did Praxeas two strokes of business for the devil at Rome. He banished prophecy, and brought in heresy. The Paraclete he put to flight, and the Father he crucified.'

Apart from the question of Montanism, this passage will show the candid and attentive student of history two things. One is, that the position of the Church of Rome and its Presidents, or Bishops was a prominent and important one, centuries before the calling of the First Œcumenical Council. The second is, that this position was something very different from that for which claims were set up in later ages : and still less was it one to which even a dream of infallibility was attached. But when everything has been said, every qualification taken full account of, it is difficult to understand how any unprejudiced scholar could ever assign the same basis for the position and authority, whatever they were, of Rome, that they do for the position of Constantinople. Whatever the position of Rome in the Ante-Nicene Church may have been, it rested upon a purely spiritual foundation—a foundation of whose origin history gives no account. Of the recognition of the *fact*, we are continually meeting the indications in the earliest Christian writers.

The position of Constantinople, on the other hand, is due solely to a political accident, the blending together of the temporal and spiritual powers at the Council of Nice. And if, as instructed by the voice of history, we feel compelled to reject Roman, or Papal Infallibility, we shall scarcely be disposed to bow our heads beneath the yoke of bondage, or put our necks into the noose of Conciliar Infallibility. We shall not forget that the Catholic Church of Jesus Christ lived and flourished,

and witnessed gloriously for His truth, and led countless souls through the thorny paths of time to the peace of eternity, for three whole centuries before the device of deciding what must be believed, upon pain of damnation, by consulting the opinions of a few hundred bishops was even thought of.

The unchangeableness of the Eastern Church is a favourite topic with a certain school, as though the raising the President of the insignificant town of Byzantium to the position now occupied by the Bishop of Constantinople, of *Œcumenical Patriarch*, was not as great an innovation as any recorded in Ecclesiastical History. It is worthy of observation that the sturdiest Anglican opponents of the Papacy appear to find intense pleasure in addressing the Bishop of Byzantium by the title of Œcumenical Patriarch, a dignity to which the Popes, in their loftiest flights, have not been able to soar.

To return to the Montanists. They at least had no reason to congratulate themselves upon the change from the primitive method of spiritual discipline, of which the Roman Church was perhaps, with the consent of the rest of the Churches, an administrative head, to the mixed system of Church and State, presided over by the unbaptized Head of the Roman Empire, a system to which the Nicene prelates gave the authority of their sanction. Before that time, the worst the Montanists had to fear was the refusal of communion by the Catholic party. After Nicæa, their acknowledged orthodoxy availed them nothing, any more than it did the equally orthodox Meletians. Thenceforward the bishops made them feel the sharpness of the temporal sword.

The historian Sozomen, in a few important sentences, describes the radical change which passed over Christianity by the union of Church and State under Constan-

time. He shows how, as soon as Christians ceased to be persecuted by the State, the dominant, or Catholic party employed the whole power of the State to persecute their fellow-christians.

He is describing the condition of things shortly after the Council of Nice.

‘Although much zeal was shown by the Arian party in the defence of their doctrines, by holding disputations, and in other ways, they had not, as yet, formed themselves into a sect, or assumed any distinctive name. There was intercommunion between them and all other Christians, except the Novatians, the people called the Phrygians, the Valentinians, the Marcionites, the Pauliani, and a few others.

‘Against all these the Emperor enacted a law, by which their places of worship were taken from them, and given to the Catholic Church. They were forbidden to assemble together either in public, or *even in private houses*. He deemed it better that they should unite with the universal Church. The effect of this law has been that the memorial of these sects has well-nigh perished.

‘But in the times of the emperors before Constantine, all who worshipped Christ, although they might differ in opinion amongst themselves, were accounted by the heathen to belong to the same religion, and were all persecuted alike. And they themselves could not enquire too curiously into their mutual differences on account of their common calamities. Thus it was, that they formed separate Churches without any difficulty, and even when their numbers were small, they were enabled to hold together. But the enactment of this law prevented their holding any public assemblies : *and the bishops and clergy in every city watched them far too closely to allow of their meeting in private*. And thus it came about that most

of them, *through fear*, joined the Catholic Church. Those who still adhered to their former opinions gradually died off, and left no successors: for they were not allowed either to meet together, or openly to give instruction in their religious tenets.

‘And even from the beginning, most of the other sects had but few followers, either on account of the mischievous nature of their doctrines, or the ignorance and foolishness of their teachers. But it was different with the Novatians. The excellence of their clergy, their agreement with the Catholic Church in doctrines relating to the Divine Nature, their numbers, which had always been considerable, and still continued to be so, all combined to prevent the law pressing upon them with any very great severity.

‘The Montanists also suffered under the same penalties as the other sects in all the other Provinces of the Empire except in Phrygia, and the neighbouring nations; for there, from the time of Montanus downwards, they have existed in great multitudes and still continue extremely numerous.’¹

From this single page of Sozomen, carefully weighed in all its bearings, there is more knowledge to be gained both of the Ante-Nicene, and the Post-Nicene Church, of the relation which one held to the other, and of both to the State, than from a whole library of modern works, treating of the same subjects.

We feel inclined to ask—Could it be the same religion, whose clergy encouraged and put in force this persecuting law of Constantine, as that whose Divine Founder said—‘My Kingdom is not of this world,’ and whose great Apostle rejoiced that ‘whether of envy and strife, or

¹ Sozom. H. E. ii. 32.

whether of good-will, Christ was preached,' so only that He was preached as the Saviour of the world?

We may feel thankful, that by no flight of a vivid imagination can we realize the idea of St. Paul, after his conversion, bursting into, and dispersing, by the aid of the myrmidons of the law, a Montanist congregation gathered together to worship Christ; or St. Peter applying to an unbaptized monarch for power to drive a schismatical or heretical bishop into banishment. Prelacy in subsequent ages has alas! made us only too familiar with such ideas, and such spectacles.

Remembering who and what Praxeas was, we may believe that the Montanists felt it no disgrace that the Letters of Peace which the Pope had issued in their favour should be revoked at his instigation.

Tertullian took a noble and a Christian revenge by subsequently refuting the doctrinal views of Praxeas, at a time when they were beginning to do much mischief. And he refuted them in such a manner that they never reared their head, in that particular form, again. It is a little remarkable too, that whilst giving a crushing reply to the arguments advanced by the followers of Praxeas, his language is far more gentle towards themselves than it is wont to be towards his opponents.

The debt due to Tertullian by Trinitarians, and through him to Montanism, has certainly never been duly recognised. And how great it is may be learned by a comparison of the Fourth and Fifth Books of Irenæus with Tertullian against Praxeas.

In St. Irenæus there is not a word which could not be made patient of a high Semi-Arian sense. In Tertullian, on the other hand, it is easy to trace almost every germ of thought which afterwards came to maturity in the Athanasian Creed. Verse after verse of that famous

Creed, or Hymn, whichever it be, might seem to be derived from Tertullian, occasionally reproducing his very language.¹ The bearing of this upon the vehement controversy which has so long agitated Christendom as to the age and origin of this Creed has been strangely overlooked.

The truth is, that Tertullian did more towards developing the doctrine of the Blessed Trinity, as to its outward expression in the language of earth and time, than any other one man, except St. Athanasius. But his attachment to the so-called heresy of Montanus has prevented, or at least hindered the recognition of it on the part of Catholics.

And yet it is the duty of an unprejudiced historian to point out, that the very principles which Tertullian held as a Montanist enabled him to do for the Catholic doctrine

¹ As a single example of coincidence of language, compare Tertullian's 'Ecce enim dico alium esse Patrem, et alium Filium, et alium Spiritum.' *Adv. Prax.* with the 'Alia est enim persona Patris, alia Filii, alia Spiritus Sancti,' of the Creed. For the subtler and more interesting coincidence of thought, cf. 'His itaque paucis tamen manifeste distinctio Trinitatis exponitur. Est enim ipse qui pronuntiat, spiritus, et pater ad quem pronuntiat, et filius de quo pronuntiat. Sic et cetera quæ nunc ad patrem de filio, vel ad filium, nunc ad filium de patre, vel ad patrem, nunc ad spiritum pronuntiantur, *unamquamque personam in sua proprietate constituunt,*' with 'Quia sicut *singillatim unamquamque personam* Deum ac Dominum confiteri Christiana veritate compellimur,' &c.

The low ebb to which the science of Theology has fallen in England, as compared with Germany, is not surprising when we remember the general neglect in our country of the study of Tertullian. And yet things would seem to be still worse in France. At least in a letter written a short time ago by a person who has lately made some noise in the world, the ex-Dominican Friar, Father Hyacinthe, he is reported to have said, in defending his marriage, that 'the Church of Rome, to be consistent, ought, like Tertullian, to forbid marriage altogether.' Father Hyacinthe was, I believe, once a Professor of Theology in a seminary for training priests for the Church of France! Alas, for the church of Fénelon and Bossuet!

of the Trinity what, perhaps, as a Catholic he could not have done.

The position taken up by Tertullian was this—He fully believed in what is called ‘the deposit of the Faith,’ committed to the Apostles by Christ once for all, from which nothing might be taken away, to which nothing can be added. He also believed, not only in the ever-abiding Presence of the Holy Ghost, as He came down to dwell with the Church on the Day of Pentecost ; but he believed that there were, from time to time, what we may designate perhaps as lesser Pentecosts. He believed, very much in the same way that various schools of what are now called Evangelical Protestants believe, in outpourings of the Holy Spirit. He believed that such an outpouring in Phrygia and the adjacent Provinces had caused Montanus and Maximilla to proclaim the word of God with power. He had a very vivid and practical faith in the many gifts bestowed by the Divine Paraclete. And he seems to have felt that a gift conferred upon himself was ability to explain and defend the great doctrines of the Trinity and the Incarnation, according to the analogy of the Faith, originally delivered to the Saints.

Thus he says—‘We indeed, as we always have done, but more especially since we have been better instructed by the Paraclete, Who verily leads men into all truth, believe in one only God, but under the following dispensation, or as we say, œconomy—that of this one only God there is a Son, His Word, who proceedeth from Him, and Who sent from heaven, from the Father, according to His own promise, the Holy Ghost, the Paraclete, the Sanctifier of the faith of those who believe in the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost.’¹ Then he adds—‘This

¹ Adv. Prax. c. 2.

rule of faith has come down to us from the beginning of the Gospel. But whilst we maintain this inviolate, there is still room allowed for a careful consideration of heretical statements, with a view to the protection and instruction of others, that no perversion of the truth may plead that it has not been examined, but by prejudgment has been condemned unheard.¹

Further on, he avowedly bases his beautiful illustrations of the Trinity by 'the tree from the root,' 'the river from the fountain,' 'the ray from the sun,' upon the teaching of the Paraclete.²

This single treatise of Tertullian would probably do more to reconcile thoughtful minds to the Catholic doctrine of the Trinity in Unity than all the Councils that have been held, all the Creeds that have been promulgated, and certainly all the Anathemas that have ever been launched, put together. Yet what strikes every one, who would wish above all things to be truthful and candid, as most unfair is, that Catholics should accept the aid of such a defence of their doctrines from Tertullian, and then turn round and call him a heretic, for no other reason than because he believed in the reality of those gifts of the Paraclete, by which, as he thought, he was enabled to defend and expound Catholic dogma in its most vital part.

Surely the silent prayer of every loving heart will be—May God preserve His Church and people from the narrow spirit of ecclesiasticism in the years that are to come!

¹ How very different this is from the manner in which the bishops of our age deal with heresy—by prosecution and persecution, as in Mr. Voysey's case, for instance. It is so much easier to prosecute by law than to refute by reason.

² Protulit enim Deus Sermonem, *quemadmodum etiam Paracletus docet*, sicut radix fruticem, et fons fluvium, et sol radium.

It will be useful to examine with some care all the charges which were brought against Montanus and the Montanists, as early as the second century.¹ They have

¹ I say, 'the second century,' although I have not the slightest hesitation in pronouncing the passage in the Fourth Book of Irenæus, which speaks of false prophets, to have been either interpolated, or else shamefully, but clumsily tampered with. '*Judicabit autem et pseudo-prophetas, qui non accepta a Deo prophetica gratia, nec Deum timentes, sed aut propter vanam gloriam, aut ad quæstum aliquem, aut aliter secundum operationem mali spiritus fingunt se prophetare, mentientes adversus Deum.*' These accusations are suspiciously like the charges brought forward by the avowed enemies of the Montanists. There are abundant indications in the genuine words of Irenæus that he regarded the believers in the New Prophecy with anything but dislike. There is a passage in the Third Book which, to my mind, without naming Montanus, goes very far to show that he approved of his movement. '*Alii vero ut donum Spiritus frustrentur, quod in novissimis temporibus, secundum placitum Patris effusum est in humanum genus illam speciem non admittunt, quæ est secundum Joannis Evangelium in qua Paracletum se missurum Dominus promisit, simul et Evangelium et Propheticum repellunt Spiritum. Infelices vere qui pseudoprophetæ quidem esse volunt, prophetiæ vero gratiam repellunt ab ecclesia: similia parientes his qui propter eos qui in hypocrisi veniunt etiam a fratrum communicatione se abstinere. Datur autem intelligi quod ejusmodi neque Ap. Paulum recipiant. In ea enim Epistola quæ est ad Corinthios de propheticiis charismatibus diligenter locutus est, et scit viros et mulieres in Ecclesia prophetantes. Per hæc igitur omnia peccantes in Spiritum Dei in irremissibile incidunt peccatum.*' The passage, which has been corrupted, may be literally translated thus. 'But some, that they may frustrate the gift of the Spirit, which in the last times according to the good pleasure of the Father has been poured out upon the human race do not admit that form of It, which is according to the Gospel of John, in which the Lord promised that he would send the Paraclete. They banish at the same time the Gospel and the prophetic Spirit. Unhappy truly, who wish indeed to be false prophets, but repel the grace of prophecy from the Church, acting similarly to those, who on account of such as come in hypocrisi, keep themselves aloof even from communion with the brethren. But it may be understood that neither do such receive the Apostle Paul: for in his Epistle to the Corinthians, he speaks diligently of the prophetic gifts, and knows both men and women who prophesied

been collected, as we have seen, by Eusebius: and we may feel sure made the most of.

The first, and perhaps the gravest charge brought forward is that Montanus taught, or encouraged ‘dissolution of marriage.’

in the Church. By all these things, sinning against the Spirit of God, men fall into the unpardonable sin.’ It would occupy too much space to examine this passage as its importance deserves. It may suffice to say that Tertullian himself might have written it in defence of Montanism. I must however complain of the way in which the passage is rendered in Messrs. Clark’s valuable Ante-Nicene Library—It commences—‘Others again (the Montanists) that they may set at nought the gift of the Spirit,’ &c. And again—‘acting like those (the Encratites)’ &c. And again—‘We must conclude moreover that these men (the Montanists) cannot admit the Apostle Paul either.’ It would scarcely be believed, but it is true, that in Irenæus there is no mention of either Montanists, or Encratites. I suppose by putting the words in brackets, the translators intended to convey to the English reader that the meaning of the author was so certain that there could not be two opinions about it. But even then, this should not have appeared in the text, but have been stated in a note. Again, by translating, ‘Datur—Ap. Paulum recipiant,’ by ‘cannot admit the Apostle Paul,’ a bias is given to the whole passage, which conveys to the non-classical reader a wrong impression. I mean that the word ‘cannot’ gives a kind of harmony and unity to the passage, which is wanting in the original, and this very want raises a suspicion that it has been corrupted. It is things like this, done with no bad intention, which sometimes make one almost ready to despair of being able to present the whole truth about the Primitive Church to those who cannot, or will not examine its literature in the languages in which it was written. If instead of ‘pseudoprophetae quidem esse volunt,’ which makes the clause self-contradictory, and absolute nonsense, we might read, propter pseudo-prophetas, the whole passage would become at once perfectly harmonious, and a powerful expostulation, in accordance with the loving spirit of Irenæus, with the enemies of Montanism. Even Tillemont saw clearly that the passage had been corrupted, for as he says, fairly enough, ‘the Montanists appealed for support to that very passage in St. John’s Gospel on account of which, according to the present state of the text of Irenæus, they are absurdly supposed to reject St. John.’

This may refer to two things : Either to Prisca's (whom her friends called a virgin) absence from her husband to preach the Gospel ; or else to that discipline which forbade second marriages. The one was a fact, or an alleged fact : the other an opinion, or a sentiment.

1. Apollonius, as we have seen, was very angry with the Montanists for presuming to call Prisca, who had a husband, a virgin. Beyond this we have no data to go upon. But we may suppose that the Montanists knew their own affairs quite as well as their adversaries. They may have spoken of their prophetess as a virgin, not intending it literally, but referring to the purity of her life and conduct ; as we might say—'Such a one is a virgin soul.'

2. If on the other hand, the dissolution of marriage is supposed to relate to the alleged fact of Prisca's leaving her husband to engage in evangelistic labours, there is no evidence to show that it was not done with his free consent. We must not forget that the Early Church considered, rightly or wrongly is not the question, that such a proceeding was encouraged by the words of our Lord, when he promised an hundred fold return to those who left *all* things, including husbands and wives, for His sake and the Gospel's. For anything we know to the contrary, Prisca's separation from her husband may have been merely a temporary one. But even if they lived apart in continence for the rest of their lives, they did nothing different from what there are countless examples of, later on, in the Greek and Roman Churches.

The Montanist discipline of absolutely forbidding second marriages, and refusing communion to those who married again, is a much more serious matter. It is certainly indefensible, that is to say if they really claimed to impose it as a precept upon the whole Catholic Church, absolutely binding upon every individual member.

Upon this question no one can be in a position to give a very decided opinion, without a careful and unprejudiced study of everything that Tertullian has written upon the subject. And then, although his judgment may, and most probably will remain unconvinced, that the Montanist position was defensible, he will have gained, at least, an insight into the extreme beauty of their theory of Christian marriage.

Our first extract shall be from Tertullian's *Exhortation to his Wife*, a work which all critics believe to be Pre-Montanist. It will show that there is more consistency and unity in the history of his speculative opinions than is sometimes imagined.

After speaking of the eternal world, in which there shall be neither marrying nor giving in marriage, he proceeds to treat of the state of things here on earth.

‘We do not reject the union of man and woman, a union which has God’s blessing as the nursery of the human race, a union designed for the replenishing of the world, and this temporal state of things. Therefore has it been permitted by God. I am speaking of a single union. For even Adam was the one husband of Eve: and Eve was his one wife: one woman, one rib.’

He next proceeds to argue that the many wives and concubines under the Patriarchal Dispensation and the Law, were only concessions permitted for a time, and then revoked by our Lord in the Gospel, Who brought back marriage to its original institution. ‘Twain, saith He, shall be one flesh.’

Then he adds—‘But let me not be supposed to be laying down these premises, as though I were about to argue that Christ had come to dissolve wedlock, to abolish marriage unions, as though onward from His advent they

were to come to an end. Let them see to that, who among their other perversities teach the disjoining one flesh in two persons, denying Him Who borrowed the woman from the man, two bodies taken from association in the same substance, and again bound them together, each to either, by the association of wedlock. In short, there is no place whatever in which we read that marriage is prohibited, forasmuch as it is indeed a good thing.'

Again, a little further on, showing that Tertullian's mind and judgment were always the same, he adds—'How detrimental to faith, what a hindrance to sanctity are second marriages, the discipline of the Church, and the prescription of the Apostle declare. They suffer not the twice married to preside : they will not grant to a widow admittance into the Order, unless she has been the wife of one man. For God's altar must be set forth pure. The whole discipline of the Church is concerned with her brightly-shining purity.'

The unfairness of the treatment which Tertullian has received from Catholics becomes very clear from these extracts. The discipline of the Catholic Church, both in the East and in the West, from the times of the Apostles to the present day has forbidden her clergy to contract a second marriage. The Western Church has gone further, and has forbidden those who minister at her altars, from the Pope down to the youthful sub-deacon, to marry at all. But, as the Catholic Church has always been most careful to say, she has done so, *only* as a matter of discipline, and not of doctrine. And this is the very line taken by Tertullian.

So that unless the Roman Church falls under that mark of Antichrist, which consists in 'forbidding to marry,' neither does Tertullian. The Roman Church forbids her Clergy to contract marriage at all ; but allows

every one else to enter into a second marriage, if in widowhood. Tertullian permitted every one, including the Clergy, to be married once, but forbade the repetition. And it is hard to see that there is any essential difference in principle between the two disciplines.

Protestants, when really learned men, have been more consistent than most Catholics, in their treatment of this question, and at the same time far more gentle. To take Neander as an example. He had no sympathy whatever with Tertullian's special Montanist views. Yet there are few writers who have so clearly realized Tertullian's ideal of Christian marriage, and so cheerfully recognized its deep spiritual beauty.

With the Anglican School it would be a waste of time to discuss this important subject, at least upon the ground of the *discipline* of the Church. I have never been able to discover that they proceed upon any other principle in dealing with Canon Law, than that of selecting such Canons for approbation, as are suitable for their purpose at the time.

If any one venture to suggest, that there is a very plain rule of the Œcumenical Council of Nicæa, which is systematically set at nought by the entire Anglican Communion, he is told with a smile, that he ought to be aware that the Canon is obsolete. If, on the other hand, anything be done by a Protestant which does not find favour in Anglican eyes, the offender is rebuked sharply by a citation from the Acts of the Councils of Gangra, or of Cloveshoe, the Fourth of Antioch, or the Sixteenth of Toledo.

Rome *may* rehabilitate the system of Canon Law, improbable as it is that she *will*: for Anglicanism to attempt it is an anachronism of the most mischievous kind.

The great error into which the Montanists fell, if they

did fall into it—for the evidence can scarcely be said to be absolutely conclusive, was that they attempted to enforce their code of discipline, and their ‘counsels of perfection’ as rules binding upon the whole Church, upon the strong and the weak alike. What they ought to have done was, to have formed themselves into an Order, or a Community of Christians, with their own peculiar customs and ordinances. They should have been an Ecclesia, or Church within the Church. And this, perhaps, was what they wished to do, if they had been permitted by the ecclesiastical party: but they do not seem ever to have had the chance, any more than the Methodists were ever allowed to form themselves into a recognized community within the Anglican Church.

In studying the history of Montanism, it should not be lost sight of, that they never did anything, with the single exception of the administration of the Eucharist by women, which was not carried to much greater lengths by the Monastic Orders. The Monastic Orders encouraged countless myriads of men and women to vow a *perpetual* abstention from marriage, and, of course, forbade their entrance into the married state *after* their vow. Some of the great Founders of these Orders decreed not merely the three yearly Lents of the Montanists, but a perpetual abstinence from animal food, a life-long Lent, never to be broken; and imposed this rigid rule upon all their followers. But all these men recognized the vast multitudes in the Catholic Church of imperfect Christians, and thus steered clear of the rock upon which Montanism was wrecked. They, however, were never subjected to the trials which the Montanists had to endure.¹ The rulers of

¹ Even such a writer as Dr. Pusey can say of the Montanists—
‘They were excommunicated in Asia, did not separate themselves from

the Church had grown wiser in this one respect, when the Monastic Orders were beginning to arise.

That Tertullian viewed all the peculiarities of Montanism, not as a part of the original deposit of the Faith, but merely as matters of Church discipline, just as we have seen the Latin Church regards the celibacy of the Clergy is tolerably clear from several passages of his *Exhortation to Chastity*, and his *De Monogamia*.

There is especially one passage in the latter treatise, which gives so clear a view of Tertullian's position, that it is well worthy of translation.

‘And so they upbraid the discipline of monogamy as a heresy. Nor is there any other cause whereby they are more impelled to deny the Paraclete, than the circumstance that they look upon him as the institutor of a novel discipline, a discipline which they esteem too severe for them.

‘Here then is where we must first take our stand in a rehandling of the whole question—Can it be maintained that the Paraclete has taught anything, which can either be charged with novelty, as opposed to Catholic tradition, or with being burdensome, as opposed to the light burden of the Lord? The Lord Himself has pronounced upon each point.

‘The Lord Himself saith, “As yet I have many things to say unto you, but ye are not yet able to bear them: when the Holy Ghost shall have come, He will lead you into all truth.” Surely then He sufficiently intimates that the Holy Spirit will bring in such things as may both be esteemed novel, as having not been previously put forth, and in a manner burdensome, as though that were the reason why they had not been published hitherto.

the Church, and would gladly have been restored.’ Pref. to Trans. of Tertul. p. 8. This seems to concede everything.

‘ But, you may say, according to such reasoning as this, everything novel and burdensome may be ascribed to the Paraclete, even though it may have come from the adverse spirit. Not so. The adverse spirit would make himself known by the divergence of his preaching from the Faith. He would begin by adulterating the rule of faith, and would go on to corrupt the order of discipline. The corruption of that which holds the first rank comes first, for faith is before discipline. A man must, of necessity, hold heretical ideas about God first, and then about what God has instituted.

‘ The Paraclete then having many things to teach fully, which the Lord reserved for His coming, according to the intimation which He gave beforehand, will begin by bearing emphatic witness to Christ, that He is such as we believe Him to be, together with the whole Dispensation of God, the Creator, and will glorify Christ, and will bring to remembrance concerning Him.

‘ Thus when the promised Paraclete has been recognised by means of the cardinal rule of faith, He will proceed to reveal those many things which pertain to discipline, for which the soundness of His preaching claims belief—whether they be novel, because they are now in course of revelation, whether they be burdensome, because they are not even now sustained; and yet they are of none other Christ, than that One who said, that “He had many other things also, which were to be fully taught by the Paraclete,” things it would appear not less burdensome to our present adversaries, than they were to those, by whom, at that time they were not able to be borne.’

Were ever great general principles expressed in such masterly language? Whatever we may think of the minor matters of detail to which Tertullian applied his

principles, there can, I imagine, be but one opinion as to the grandeur and solidity of the principles themselves. When we compare the writings of Tertullian, in all their marvellous breadth of thought and grasp of language, with the petty invectives of Apollonius, based upon such wretched personalities as that Montanus made use of cosmetics, we shall cease to wonder that Montanism made the progress which it did, or that it retained its position for so many centuries as an integral portion of the Catholic Church.

A consideration of the mutual position of the Montanists and their adversaries upon the question of fasting will yield also a rich harvest of thought and knowledge to the candid enquirer.

There were unquestionably, both in the Apostolic age and onward, two schools in the Church, the ascetic and the non-ascetic.

St. Timothy belonged both in principle and practice, to the former, St. Paul, in principle at least, for his own practice was at times very rigorous, to the latter, or non-ascetic School.

It will not surprise those who have made any progress in the study of Primitive Antiquity to find, that the Montanists took up the mantle of the early ascetic traditions about such men as St. James of Jerusalem, St. Timothy, and perhaps of St. John at Ephesus, after the departure from this world of the Virgin Mother. The so-called Catholic party were at this period, the second century, and for some time subsequent, opposed to everything in the shape of rigorous asceticism. This is a state of things not so generally known as it ought to be. We are apt to imagine that such a word as laxity could never be predicated with truth of the Primitive Church. A study of its original records will teach us a very different

lesson. We shall find, especially in the intervals between the persecutions, evidence of wide-spread, and sometimes even of extreme moral corruption. If we were to believe all the accusations hurled by the ecclesiastical party against those whom they were learning to call schismatics and heretics, and which were hurled back with as hearty good-will by the schismatics, we should lose our cherished belief in the loveliness and the purity of the Early Church. But there is no need for this. Living apart, in spirit at least, from the noisy controversialists were thousands of holy men and women, on both sides, who took no part in the unhallowed strife. They led pure, simple lives of faith and prayer—some of them practising scarcely any fasting, for the obligatory fasts of the Church were confined to one or two days in the year, but denying themselves in other ways ; others again, such as the Montanists, making use of what in those times were deemed very rigorous fasts, living for a portion of two weeks in the year upon dry food, yet all prepared to live and die for Christ, most of them tarrying till He came to them by an ordinary death, like those whose simple memorials we see at every step on either hand for miles in the silent Catacombs of Rome, others, whose pictured palm branch, or the little vial of blood attests, that whether fasters, or non-fasters, whether like the Catholics, they scrupled not to eat meat throughout the year, or whether, like the Montanists, they fed principally upon herbs, whether, in short, they were ascetic or non-ascetic, they could all, if need were, lay down their lives for that Master, who had laid down His life for them.

Thus it was then. Those days were free neither from bigots nor bigotry. But we bless God for the full assurance that the bigots were in the minority then, just as we

trust, whatever may be the outward semblance of things, they are even now.

In spite of seeming anathemas, and what are sometimes, carelessly perhaps, called 'damnatory clauses' of Creeds, the people of God, whether conforming to established Churches or not, have no curses or anathemas in their hearts. In their hearts they know nothing but love for those who love God.

How lovingly the Christians of these two schools could live together is shown in that most lovely record of the second century, the narrative of the martyrs of Vienne and Lyons. There we see the ascetic Montanist Alkibiades, living with his non-ascetic Catholic brethren upon terms of perfect amity. The passage in which this is related has been so often referred to, and even pleaded in the interest of bigotry, that it may do good to transcribe it, as it stands in the pages of Eusebius.¹

'The same account of the before-mentioned martyrs contains another relation, well worthy of being preserved. There was a certain person among them named Alkibiades, who had led a very austere life, and who had used as food, bread and water only. After he had been cast into prison, and was attempting to lead a similar life there, it was revealed to Attalus, after his first conflict which he had accomplished in the amphitheatre, that Alkibiades did not do well in not using the creatures of God, thus giving an occasion of stumbling to others. And Alkibiades was persuaded, and afterwards partook of all kinds of food, giving thanks unto God. For these martyrs were not unvisited by the grace of God. The Holy Ghost was Himself their counsellor.

¹ H. E. v. 3.

‘With reference to Montanus and Alkibiades,¹ and Theodotus and their followers, there were at that time in Phrygia and the parts adjacent, those who were beginning to be highly esteemed by many, because of their taking up the gift of prophecy.² For there were still many other wonderful miracles of divine grace, wrought in various Churches, which created a belief in many minds that these also were endued with the prophetic gift. And when there arose dissension concerning these manifestations, the brethren who were in Gaul put forth their own judgment concerning them in a careful, reverent³ and orthodox manner, publishing various epistles of the martyrs, who had been perfected amongst them, which when they were in bonds, they had indited to the brethren in Asia and Phrygia. They wrote also to Eleutherus, who was at that time the Bishop of the Romans, sending

¹ The editors say this is a different Alkibiades from the one before mentioned: but the editors have really no means of knowing.

² Τὴν περὶ τοῦ προφητεῦειν ὑπόληψιν. The use of ὑπόληψιν here seems to me very significant. It appears to show that the Montanists merely claimed to carry on the prophetic office, as it had descended to them from the Apostolic Church. The Catholic party thought that office ought to cease with the Prophet Quadratus, and the Prophetess Ammias, whom they recognized as possessing the true prophetic gift. I believe that the direction in which this curious piece of evidence points is, that the ecclesiastical party thought it was now time that the exercise of the Christian Ministry should be confined to the hierarchy of bishops, priests and deacons, as upheld by the Ignatian theory. The Montanists contended for the retention of the original ‘liberty of prophesying’ by all who were called by the Spirit to do so. This will explain the intense bitterness of the hierarchical party against the Montanists upon what seem to us such trivial grounds. It is curious how all the miseries with which the Catholic Church has been scourged, arising from within, seem to be in some way or other connected with the ‘strife about Episcopacy.’

³ Εὐλαβεῖν here seems to mean both careful and reverent.

as it were an embassy *on behalf of the peace of the Churches.*'

The nature of these letters has been greatly debated. Were they in behalf of the Montanist Churches of Asia Minor, or in condemnation of them? That they should be called 'letters of peace' is in favour of the former idea, though Tillemont asks naturally from his point of view, is there no other way of consulting for the peace of the Church than by advising communion with heretics? Tillemont and some others who think that the Gallic martyrs wrote to the Pope against the Montanists rely, to a great extent, upon the words of Eusebius that their letters were 'orthodox.' Eusebius, they say, who was avowedly Anti-Montanist, would not have so spoken if they had been in favour of that sect. But the question cannot be so easily determined. It is a suspicious circumstance that Eusebius, contrary to his usual practice, does not give us a single extract from these letters. If however we suppose that they were similar in character to the letters which Irenæus wrote to Pope Victor in behalf of the Quartodeciman Churches of Asia, counselling mutual love and forbearance, it will then be plain why Eusebius speaks of them in the vague manner which he does. The confessors and martyrs of Vienne and Lyons were too greatly honoured throughout the Catholic Church to admit of their being spoken of by the ecclesiastical party as being in favour of the Montanists. Thus Eusebius covers up what they did say by laudatory words, which may mean one thing, or may mean another. This suppression of evidence, examples of which we find at every turn, may prevent our being able to *prove* what was the real state of the case, but cannot prevent our suspecting it.

This controversy involves another. Was Eleutherus

or Victor, the Pope who issued Letters on behalf of the Montanists, and then recalled them? Rigaltius and Bishop Pearson assume that it was the former, Tillemont feels sure that it was the latter. Rigaltius sums up the whole question concisely and with tolerable fairness, thus — ‘Eleutherus, Bishop of Rome was first deceived by the Montanists, who craftily hid their error under the pretence of a feigned piety. Moreover, being moved thereto by the letters and exhortations of the martyrs of Lyons, he wrote an epistle to the churches of Asia and Phrygia concerning the receiving of the Montanists into the Church. But being soon after admonished by one Praxeas of Asia, he revoked the pacific letters which he had sent; and following the authority of his predecessor Anicetus, refused to admit of a new prophecy.’

This summing up of Rigaltius is perhaps as fair a conclusion as any at which we can arrive. And certainly it does not err on the side of being too favourable to Montanism.

When, in the next place we turn to the pages of Tertullian, to see what could be urged in favour of Montanist asceticism, it is almost enough to take away our breath to see how the Catholics have completely turned round, and changed their theory about fasting. This is shown by the accusations which they brought against the Montanists, accusations which Tertullian admits and endeavours to meet. Our quotations must extend to some length, but they are so interesting in themselves, and they fix so conclusively the fact of innovation, and change of ground upon the Catholic Church, at some period subsequent to the close of the second century, that no one who wishes to penetrate to a knowledge of the real mind of the Early Church will regret their insertion.

‘It is,’ he says, ‘the opposition of the Psychics,’ he means the Catholic party, ‘to our fasting, which raises a controversy with the Paraclete. On this account the New Prophecies are rejected. It is not because Montanus and Priscilla and Maximilla preach any other God ; it is not because they hold a wrong faith concerning Jesus Christ ; it is not that they overturn any rule of faith or hope ; it is because they teach plainly we should fast oftener than we marry.

‘They reprove us because we keep our own fasts, because we very frequently prolong our stations until the evening, because we observe xerophagies, not making use of flesh, or succulent food, or the more juicy kinds of fruit, because we do not eat or drink anything that has the flavour of wine, because we abstain from the bath, as being in accordance with our dry food.

‘They reproach us with novelty, concerning the unlawfulness of which they lay down the following prescriptive rule—that it must either be adjudged to be heresy, if the point in question be a human presumption, or else it must be pronounced to be pseudo-prophecy, if it be a spiritual proclamation, so that anyhow we, who are of a different way of thinking may hear sentence of anathema.

‘As pertains to fasts, they oppose to us that certain days were appointed by God, as when, in Leviticus, the Lord commanded Moses to observe the tenth day of the seventh month as a day of expiation, saying, “That day shall be holy unto you, and ye shall afflict your souls, and every soul which shall not be afflicted on that day shall be cut off from among his people.” In the Gospel at all events, they think that those days have been set apart for fasting in which the Bridegroom was taken away, and that now the legal and prophetical ancient rites have been abolished, they are the only lawful days

for Christian fasts. For where they please, they recognize the meaning of the saying—"The Law and the Prophets were until John." Accordingly they are of opinion that with regard to the future, fasting was to be differently observed under the New Discipline, of choice, and not of precept, according to the times and condition of each individual.

• This, they urge, was what the Apostles observed, who imposed no other yoke of keeping stated fasts, binding upon all alike, except those days referred to.

• As for xerophagies, they charge them with being a novel title for a pretended duty, and nigh akin to heathen superstition, like the abstinences which purify Apis, or Isis, or Ceres, by restrictions laid upon certain kinds of food. But faith, they say, which has been made free in Christ, owes no debt of abstinence from particular meats, even to the Jewish Law—admitted as it has been by the Apostle, once for all, to the whole range of the market-place—that Apostle, they say, who holds in detestation both those who forbid to marry, and those who command to abstain from meats, the creatures of God. And therefore they say that we are spoken of beforehand, as those who in the last times depart from the faith, giving heed to the spirits which seduce the world, having the conscience seared and burnt with doctrines of liars.

Admirable doctrine! this of the Catholics, as every Protestant would say: doctrine to be subscribed with both hands. But is it credible that this was the original teaching of the Catholic Church?

Incredible as it may seem, it is the simple truth. These are the arguments of the Catholics of Tertullian's days, the arguments of the adherents of that Church which claims never to have altered her position since Christianity began, but to be unchanged and unchangeable.

But there is much more than this, showing that there is not a single argument urged by the Protestant Reformers of the sixteenth century against Rome, and on behalf of spiritual freedom, which they might not have taken, word for word, from the Catholic adversaries of Tertullian.

‘ Thus they affirm that we share with the Galatians the sharp rebuke of being observers of days and months and years. They hurl this dart at us, that Isaiah has authoritatively pronounced—“ It is not such a fast that the Lord hath chosen, that is to say, not abstinence from food, but the works of righteousness, which the prophet there sub-joins.” And they add, that the Lord Himself, in the Gospel, has given a compendious reply to every kind of scruple with respect to food, by saying—“ Not those things which enter into the mouth defile the man.” They add that the Apostle teaches us, that “ meat commendeth us not to God,” since, neither do we abound, that is to say, in grace, if we eat, nor do we lack, if we eat not.

‘ By these and such like explanations, they subtly tend to this point, that every one who is prone to appetite may regard it as a superfluous and unnecessary duty to abstain from, or diminish, or delay daily food, since God, we know, prefers works of righteousness and innocence. We are well aware of the kind of persuasion ‘ employed to suit carnal conveniences : how easy it is to say, “ I must believe with my whole heart,” “ I will love God and my neighbour,” “ On these two commandments hang all the Law and the Prophets, and not on the emptiness of my chest and stomach.” ’

To these arguments brought forward by the Catholics against asceticism, Tertullian addresses himself in the subsequent pages of his tractate on Fasting, and replies with his usual vigour. But into these arguments it is unnecessary to enter. It is foreign to my purpose, and in itself a

question of little interest, whether Tertullian, in pleading the cause of asceticism, and exterior abstinence were right; or whether the Catholic party, who stood up for the fullest exercise of the right of private judgment, and unlimited individual Christian liberty in all such matters, were wrong. It is enough for us to mark well, how entirely the two parties, or schools in the Church have shifted their ground, and changed their sides since the second century. Nothing can be more Catholic than Tertullian is, as Catholicism is now; nothing more Protestant than his Catholic adversaries, as Catholicism was then.

It is very singular, but it seems to be pretty certain—speaking of course generally, and with large exceptions—that the martyrs and confessors of the Primitive Church appear to have taken the Catholic, or non-ascetic side. It is so different from what we should have expected *à priori*: yet the indications of the fact are constantly met with. Amongst the numerous martyrs of Lyons and Vienne, we have founded but one who took the Montanist, or ascetic line, which he immediately abandoned, when it gave occasion to scandal.

Then the reproaches of Tertullian, and the lamentations of St. Cyprian over the luxury and voluptuousness of some of the Catholic Confessors, who were living in hourly expectation of martyrdom, must have had, one would suppose, some foundation in fact. St. Cyprian, we may observe, speaks even more strongly, because less rhetorically than Tertullian.¹

¹ 'Quas autem plagas, quæ verbera non meremur, quando nec confessores, qui exemplo cæteris ad bonos mores esse debuerant teneant disciplinam?' Epist. II. And still worse—'Quid deinde illud, quam vobis execrandum debet videri, quod cum summo animi nostri gemitu et dolore cognovimus qui Dei templa, *post* confessionem sanctificata et illustrata membra, turpi et infami concubitu suo macu-

It is necessary now to enter upon a very important question, perhaps indeed the most important connected with Montanism. It is—What was the position which it assumed with respect to the rest of the Christian Church? Did the Montanists pretend to be the Church, in such a sense, that those who were outside their communion were also outside the Catholic Church? Or did they, on the other hand, while recognizing the right of all who were true believers in Christ to be called members of His universal Church, merely believe that the Paraclete spoke to those who were willing to listen to His voice, calling them away from the world and the ways of the world, teaching them and winning them to live a higher and more self-denying life, than was possible for all the brethren? Upon the answer to this question must depend whether we can view the Montanist movement with any degree of sympathy, as at least the work of sincere and earnest, even though mistaken men; or whether we must condemn it as altogether opposed in its narrowness and exclusiveness to the loving Spirit of the Gospel.

To these questions it is easy enough to give an answer off-hand. It is not so easy to give one after weighing as carefully as may be the evidence on both sides.

I would commence by saying, as I often feel constrained to do, that I do not think we have sufficient evidence in hand to enable us to come to any absolutely certain conclusion.

I believe however that the evidence, viewed as a whole, is in favour of supposing that the Montanists had no wish,

lent cubilia sua cum feminis promiscue jungentes.' This is sad enough; but it should never be lost sight of that the guilty parties were probably very few. And St. Cyprian's immediately subsequent words ought also to be taken into consideration, 'Quando etsi stuprum conscientiae eorum desit, hoc ipso grande crimen est, quod illorum scandalo in aliorum ruinas exempla nascuntur.' Epist. 13.

or intention to look upon themselves as exclusively the Catholic Church. We never find in Tertullian such claims as were afterwards put forth by the Donatists, who arrogated to themselves the title of the only true, and therefore the only Catholic Church, and in so exclusive a manner that they denied the validity of the Sacraments in any communion except their own, and rebaptized as heathens the Catholics whom they won over to themselves.

Now how wholly different is the theory and practice of Tertullian. It cannot be proved that he ever advocated the rebaptization of a single Catholic. When he addresses the heathen, or those who were regarded by himself equally with the Catholic Church as heretics, he invariably identifies himself in spirit with the Church. He puts himself as it were upon the platform of a common Christianity.

When he writes his little Tract on Chastity, he addresses it, apparently, to a Catholic friend. 'I do not doubt, my brother, that after the premission in peace of your wife, your thoughts are turned to the composing of your mind, and directed to the contemplation of the end of your lonely life, and that you are in need of counsel.'

He was a Montanist at the time, for he speaks of the Gospel being preached by the holy prophetess Prisca. What seems to be perfectly evident is, that though urging his friend, and urging him strongly not to marry a second time, he puts it upon general grounds. He appeals to Scripture as interpreted, to the best of his judgment, according to the analogy of the faith. He does not speak as if he had any quarrel with the Catholic Church. He recognizes the common discipline of single marriage then binding upon all the Clergy, both of the Church as well as of the Sects. There is no intimation that if his friend did not, after all, follow his advice, he would cease to

belong to the Catholic Church, or that he would be deprived of the grace of the Sacraments. All this Tertullian would have set before his friend, if he had held that the Montanists were, exclusively, *the* Church, and that Second Marriages were of themselves adultery. Doubtless Tertullian held, that any one who contracted a second marriage could not be a member of any of the Montanist churches. But this is nothing different in principle from saying that anyone who became a Franciscan, or Dominican friar, would, if he contracted a single marriage, cease to belong to those Orders. Indeed, if anyone had done such a thing as this last, in Spain, for instance, a few hundred years ago, it may be feared that excommunication would have been a small part of the penalty to which he would have exposed himself. Nothing perhaps can show the terrible unfairness with which the Montanists have been treated better than this. A renegade Franciscan, or Dominican friar, would be considered to place himself outside of the pale of the Catholic Church, although those Orders are only voluntary associations. Montanism is charged with heresy because, although a voluntary association, those who broke its rules were treated as not being in communion with it, although no Montanist went so far as to say that such persons could not be in communion with the Catholic Church. And with respect to the rules which were laid down by the Montanists for observance amongst themselves, it might be supposed that their principles and theory were such as would especially commend themselves to the approbation of the admirers of the Anglican system, and the supporters of what is called the *Branch* theory of the Church.

Montanism became, at least early in the second century, if indeed it were not so from the very beginning of Christianity, the National Church of the Province of

Phrygia, and of some other places. It was, in a word, a Branch of the Catholic Church in those districts. Why then should not the Phrygian Branch of the Church lay down rules for the guidance of her own children in matters of ritual and discipline, just as the Anglican Branch does? Why should not the National Church of Phrygia keep a fortnight's fast in the year, if she thought good? or exclude from her communion those who contracted a second marriage, just as the Anglican Church deems fit to exclude from *her* communion those who marry a deceased wife's sister?

With the inhabitants of Phrygia, the Montanist Church was the Church of their baptism, just as the Anglican Church is, for Englishmen, the Church of their baptism, that is, of course, if we can be baptized into any other church than the Catholic Church. From Anglicans then, who say that for any one to abandon the Anglican Branch of the Church for any other, is to abandon Christ, and to be cut off from the grace of his Holy Spirit, as a punishment for their apostasy in forsaking the Church of their Baptism, may be expected the fullest sympathy with the Montanist Church of Phrygia, and with the many sufferings and persecutions which she had to undergo at the hands of the ancient opponents of the Branch theory.

The truth of this whole matter seems to be that the Catholics were guilty of breaking that grand, statesman-like Concordat which St. Paul drew up as a basis of union between the followers of those two tendencies which exist in human nature, and which ever will exist, one towards bodily, or outward asceticism, the other towards its rejection, as being unconnected with purely spiritual concerns.

If the Catholic Church in all ages and in all countries, in her schools and subdivisions had but adhered to those

magnificent principles which St. Paul lays down in his Epistle to the Romans, what heartburnings, and persecutions, and unchristian strife might have been averted. 'Him that is weak in the faith receive ye, but not to judge his doubtful thoughts. One indeed believeth that he may eat all things, another who is weak, eateth herbs. Let not him that eateth despise him that eateth not, and let not him which eateth not, judge him that eateth : for God hath accepted him. Who art thou that judgest another man's servant? To his own master he standeth or falleth, but he shall be made to stand. For God is able to establish him. One man distinguisheth between one day and another : another esteemeth every day alike. Let every man be fully persuaded in his own mind. He that observeth the day, observeth it to the Lord ; he that observeth not the day, to the Lord he doth not observe it. He that eateth, eateth to the Lord, for he giveth God thanks ; and he that eateth not, to the Lord he eateth not, and giveth God thanks. Why dost thou judge thy brother ; or why dost thou set at nought thy brother ? For we shall all stand before the judgment-seat of Christ. Let us not therefore judge one another any more ; but judge this rather, that no one put a stumbling block, or an occasion to fall in his brother's way. I know and am persuaded by the Lord Jesus, that there is nothing unclean of itself, but to him that esteemeth anything to be unclean, to him it is unclean. And if thy brother be grieved with thy meat, now walkest thou not according to charity. Destroy not him with thy meat for whom Christ died. All things indeed are pure, but it is evil for that man who eateth with offence.'

What is so inexpressibly shocking is, that the so-called Catholic party have in every age, from the second century down to the present day, gone diametrically in opposition

to these pure and simple and eternal principles of Christian liberty, laid down at once so lovingly, and with so firm a hand by the great Apostle of the Gentiles.

In the second and third century they were not contented with keeping no fasts themselves, except Good Friday and Easter Eve, but they drove out the Montanists as excommunicated heretics, because they thought it right to do what St. Paul had made provision for their doing by the practice of abstemiousness. Then, after Montanism had been finally crushed, they turned round and ordered the observance of many days of fasting, and commanded abstention from meats, and consigned men's souls to perdition, and sometimes burnt their bodies for leaving undone what they had anathematized the Montanists for doing. It would seem impossible for the Catholic party, as a party, to escape the charge of having for the sake of meat destroyed souls for whom Christ died : and that in a twofold manner, by injunction and prohibition.

Oh ! when will the whole Church of Christ, not merely in sections and parties, but as one undivided communion and fellowship return to those simple principles of divine charity and Christian liberty enunciated by St. Paul, by leaving all such matters as these to be determined by the consciences of her individual members.

There is evidence sufficient to convince most unprejudiced minds that Tertullian, and therefore we may assume, the Montanist party generally had no wish to condemn other Christian communities. This is shown by the way in which he speaks of the Churches of Greece in his Treatise on the *Veiling of Virgins*.

He is pleading that the Montanist communities of Africa may veil their virgins without reproach, in the same way that the Churches of Greece and other countries veiled theirs.

‘However, in the meanwhile, I will not base our custom upon truth. For the nonce, let it be a mere custom. Then to custom I will oppose custom. Throughout Greece and some of its barbaric provinces, the greater number of the churches veil their virgins. And the same institution prevails in some places even under our own African sky, so that no one can attribute it to Greek or barbarian nationalities exclusively. But I have proposed for your imitation such churches as Apostles themselves, or Apostolic men have founded; and I may venture to say that they were founded before some churches¹ that I could name. These churches then have the same authority of custom to which they can appeal. They can plead prescription and predecessors, with a better grace than our African opponents can. What then shall we observe? Which custom shall we choose? We may not contemptuously reject a custom which we cannot condemn. It is not an alien custom, for we find it not amongst aliens, but amongst those who share with us the right of peace, and the name of brotherhood. They and we have one common faith, one God, the same Christ, the same hope, the same baptismal font. To sum up everything in a single word—We are one Church. Thus, whatsoever belongs to our brethren, the same too is ours.’

View this important passage in any light we choose, the conclusion is irresistible, that the Montanists did not consider themselves separatists, nor yet, as the Donatists did afterwards, the only Catholics. They looked upon themselves as a portion of the one Catholic Church of Christ: and they were so considered by the less bigoted amongst the Catholics themselves. They had their pecu-

¹ The common reading is, ‘*ante quosdam*,’ it ought surely to be, *ante quasdam*.

liarities undoubtedly. They were very credulous. They believed in visions and prophecies and miracles. They practised austerities themselves, and they were somewhat too vehement in urging similar austerities upon others. They were driven by the persecutions of the hierarchical party, and the temporizing vacillations of the Bishop of Rome to assume in some places a quasi-schismatical attitude. But take them all in all, never perhaps was there a school in the Catholic Church, which, viewing things as we can see them, after the lapse of ages, did more good, preserving the Church from sinking into a very Dead Sea of ecclesiasticism, and delivering her from being bound hand and foot by the graveclothes which a hierarchy, more exclusive and intolerant than was that of Judaism in its worst of days, would have wrapped around her.

A short review of the influence of Montanism upon ecclesiastical literature may fittingly conclude this history.

Taking an extended view of Primitive Christianity, we shall find that different Churches, different schools, and the great individual leaders of thought, such as Justin Martyr, Clement of Alexandria, Origen, Tertullian, Irenæus, had what we may venture to call, for want of a better term, favourite Christian Books, written for the most part before the close of the first century, to which they were wont to appeal for confirmation and authority.

The most precious, and upon the whole the oldest of these works have been preserved to us in what are now called the Canonical Books of the New Testament. Still many valuable documents have been lost. For instance, although the Four Gospels of Matthew, Mark, Luke and John are believed to have been published and widely known and circulated when Justin Martyr wrote his *Dialogue with Trypho*, yet instead of citing *them*, he

prefers to quote a work which he calls the *Memoirs of the Apostles*. This work, although evidently agreeing in the main with our Four Gospels, gave many important, or at least interesting particulars of the Acts of our Blessed Lord which they have omitted. Such is the mention of the implements which He made when He wrought as a carpenter,¹ such the independent and circumstantial account of the mockery which He endured when He hung upon the Cross,² such the testimony that when He gave His disciples power to tread unhurt upon serpents and scorpions, He added the word ‘scolopendra,’ or ‘centipedes :’³ with almost numberless other instances which might be given. Indeed, if we were to treat early Christian literature in exactly the same way that we treat any other literature, we might say that Justin Martyr, writing about A.D. 140, never, or scarcely ever quotes the Four Canonical Gospels, but prefers to cite some other record of the Life of Christ.

The time will come, and perhaps soon, when this and similar facts will be universally admitted. At present many shut their eyes to them. And human nature being the same in all ages, no one ought to be surprised that bishops and other ecclesiastics, who merely carry on the

¹ ‘Ταῦτα γὰρ τὰ τεκτονικὰ ἔργα εἰργάζετο ἐν ἀνθρώποις ὧν ἄροτρα καὶ ζυγά.’ Dial. cum Tryph. c.

² ‘Οἱ γὰρ θεωροῦντες αὐτὸν ἐσταυρωμένον καὶ κεφαλῆς ἕκαστος ἐκίνουν καὶ τὰ χεῖλη δεισσεφρον καὶ τοῖς μυζωτῆρσιν ἐν ἀλλήλοις διερινοῦντες ἔλεγον εἰρωνεύμενοι ταῦτα ἃ καὶ ἐν τοῖς ἀπομνημονεύμασι τῶν ἀποστόλων αὐτοῦ γέγραπται—υἱὸν Θεοῦ ἑαυτὸν ἔλεγε, καταβὰς περιπατεῖτο, σωσάτω αὐτὸν ὁ Θεός.’ *Ibid.* c. 101.

³ ‘Διδῶμι ὑμῖν ἐξουσίαν καταπατεῖν ἐπ’ αἰῶ ὄφειων καὶ σκορπίων καὶ σκολοπεινῶν,’ κ.τ.λ. *Ibid.* c. 76.

After a careful examination of the evangelical quotations of Justin M. I think it probable that he occasionally cites a *written* copy of the Fourth Gospel : but *never* of the three first Gospels.

traditions which they have received from their predecessors in office, are at first startled and angry when reminded of such facts. Still it is a duty owed to truth that they should be reminded.

It would be difficult for anyone whose attention has not been specially directed to the subject, to realize at once the vast extent of the literature referred to. Its extent can only be conjectured from the scanty relics which are scattered through the literature of succeeding ages, just as a geologist conjectures the extent of territory over which such and such extinct animals once prevailed, by the existence of their fossilized remains in certain strata.

It is wonderful too for how long many of these so-called Apocryphal Books survived, and how hard a fight they maintained before they submitted to extinction. But all this is very natural; and gives great reality and vividness to our ideas about the Primitive Church. It shows us that Ecclesiastical History is exactly like any other history. Only we shall certainly do well to believe that there was a special Providence of the Eternal which watched over the whole progress of the religion of Christ in the world, which still watches over it, and will continue to guide and protect it even unto the end.

To give but a single instance of what is meant, Eusebius preserves a curious incident in the history of Serapion, a Bishop of Antioch.

He had paid a visit upon a certain occasion to the Christian community of a place called Rhossus, a town in Cilicia. He found these people making use as one of their Sacred, or as we should now call them Canonical Books, of a work called the Gospel according to Peter. Serapion during his stay at Rhossus seems to have found no fault with this work; but learning after his departure that it contained heretical matter, he wrote strongly against it,

and forbade its use in the Rhossian Church for the future. But it will be the best, as it is the fairest, to let Serapion tell the story in his own words.

‘Now we, my brethren, receive Peter and the rest of the Apostles even as we receive Christ. But the spurious writings which pass under their names we reject after examination, knowing that we have received no such things. When I was with you, I supposed that you all adhered to the true faith ; and as I had not read through the work which is circulated among you under the name of the *Gospel according to Peter*, I said, that if this were the only thing which seemed to produce a captious spirit amongst you, let it be read. But now that I have learned, from what has been told me, that the minds of those who peruse it are debauched by a certain heresy, I shall make haste to come to you again, so that, my brethren, you may expect me shortly. Now we, my brethren, are perfectly aware of what nature the heresy of Marcion is, how he contradicts himself, not understanding the things of which he speaks, as you will learn by what has been written to you. For I have been able, by means of those who are thoroughly acquainted with this Gospel, to peruse it. I am speaking of those who received it in succession from the persons who first had to do with it, the Docetæ; for most of the ideas expressed in its teaching belong to them. And I find that the greater portion of its contents is agreeable to the true doctrine of the Saviour, but some things which I subjoin have been added.’

What is worthy of especial remark is the opposition between ancient and modern principles of criticism. Serapion never thought, apparently, of examining what amount of external testimony there was in favour of this *Gospel of Peter*, and then accepting, or rejecting it, according as he was satisfied, or dissatisfied with that evidence. But he

tells us openly and candidly that his opinion was determined by what he thought of the contents of the book. He found it not altogether agreeable to his standard of orthodoxy. Thus he viewed the *Gospel of Peter* with suspicion, if he did not reject it altogether.

This subject is one of great fascination and importance, but it would require a volume to treat it with the fulness it deserves. I only propose to enter into one branch of it, but a branch full of interest. It is—Which were the favourite sacred books of the Montanists? We shall find that they were probably two, among those now included in the Canon—the Epistle to the Hebrews, and the Apocalypse.

Of the influence exercised by the former work, and of its possible recasting under Montanist influence, I have already spoken.

With regard to the Revelation, a careful examination of the available evidence brings to light some very remarkable and interesting facts.

It will be found that almost in exact proportion to the spread and influence of Montanism in the Early Church, was there a knowledge of this mysterious Book, and a reverence for it, as of the highest authority. Whilst on the other hand, in those very places and by those persons in which and by whom the Montanists were slandered and persecuted, in those places and by those persons was the Apocalypse rejected or despised.

To give the proof of these propositions.

The strong Montanist element in the Churches on the banks of the Rhone has been already noticed. There is still extant in the pages of Eusebius a letter written by them, giving an account of their martyred brethren, who suffered in the terrible local persecution under

Marcus Aurelius, somewhere about the close of the third quarter of the second century. This Epistle is allowed by almost all critics to be a genuine historical document of that age.

The Letter is addressed thus—‘The servants of Christ dwelling at Vienne and Lyons in Gaul to the brethren in Asia and Phrygia, possessing the same faith and hope of redemption with us, peace and grace and glory from God the Father and Christ Jesus our Lord.’

Calling to mind all we know about the connection of Phrygia with Montanism, this special reference to that Province carries with it a world of meaning. And when we find one of the confessors, Vettius Epagathus spoken of thus—‘He also was taken up into the Martyrs’ portion, being divinely called a paraclete of Christians, having the Paraclete in himself, more abundantly than Zacharias had,’¹ we discern another clear trace of Montanism.

This Letter then, in addition to being very full of Scriptural allusions and phraseology has eight, or perhaps nine direct citations from the New Testament, and of these no less than three are from the Apocalypse.

Yet more. These eight or nine passages, with two exceptions, are prefaced by no note of the source from whence they are taken. One of the exceptions is—‘That

¹ I subjoin the Greek of this very remarkable passage for three reasons. 1. No translation can possibly do it justice. 2. No one, I think, could rise from a careful consideration of it without seeing at least a *leaning* to Montanism. 3. Because the twofold use of the word Paraclete, and the play upon their meanings ought effectually and for ever to dispose of the wicked calumny that Montanus called himself, or was called by his followers *the* Paraclete, in the sense of being the Holy Ghost. ‘Ἀνελήφθη καὶ αὐτὸς εἰς τὸν κλῆρον τῶν μαρτύρων, παράκλητος Χριστιανῶν χρητατίσας, ἔχων δὲ τὸν Παράκλητον ἐν ἑαυτῷ τὸ Πνεῦμα πλεῖον τοῦ Ζαχαρίου.’

was fulfilled which was spoken by our Lord, The time shall come in which every one that killeth you, will think that he doeth God service.' The other is—' that the Scripture might be fulfilled, Let the lawless be yet more lawless, and let the just be yet more justified.' ¹

The connection of St. Irenæus with the literary history of the Book of Revelation is too well known to need dwelling upon. But as there are good grounds for thinking that he was the actual composer of the Epistle of the Gallic Churches to their Asiatic and Phrygian brethren, this Letter indicates that there was not only a connecting link between these distant Churches in their common reverence for the Apocalypse, but also a link between St. Irenæus and the Montanists.

It has already been pointed out how a passage of Irenæus, which in all probability expressed strong sympathy with the Montanists has been corrupted, and made nonsense of, in order to condemn them. Such, sad to say, have been the tricks played with the venerable literary remains of Primitive Christianity.

Our acceptance of the theory of the Montanist love for the Revelation will go a long way to explain a difficulty which has hitherto received scarcely an attempt even to solve it—the undoubted reception of the Book by the Asiatic Churches and writers of the second century, and the equally undoubted general rejection of it by the leading Asiatic Fathers in the fourth and fifth centuries. Their bitter hatred of the Montanists led to a dislike of their

¹ The Scripture referred to is undoubtedly Rev. xxii. 11. It affords however another example of the wide difference between the text of this book as it was known to the early Church, and that which we now possess. The rendering of this passage in the English Authorised Version is not very creditable to the translators. There is an evident attempt to make a point against the Tridentine view of the doctrine of Justification.

favourite Book. And the early doubt about the authorship gave them a convenient handle for removing it from the Sacred Canon.

Again, Tertullian's own personal love and reverence for the Apocalypse are very conspicuous to an attentive student of his works. And what renders this circumstance all the more significant is, that it is not difficult to discern that Tertullian was perfectly conscious of the authenticity of the Book being a matter of dispute. And we may fairly believe, that it was his inability to lay his hand upon the needful evidence which alone prevented his entering upon its defence with his accustomed impetuosity.

A great bond of union, regarding the matter from a literary point of view, for this is perhaps all that the evidence will warrant, between Tertullian and Irenæus and the Montanists, was the strong Millenarian doctrines which they all held. There was a connection between the Millenarians and the Montanists, just as there was between the latter and the Quartodecimans. The precise limits, or extent of this connection cannot now be traced. But the dim light enables us to discern thus much. The enemies of the Millenarians were, for the most part, the enemies of the Montanists. The friends of the Millenarians were the friends of the Montanists. And as the Apocalypse was the favourite book of the Millenarians, even more than it was of the Montanists, it would naturally become a precious bond of union between them, and at the same time an object of attack from their common foes.

The words of Tertullian, in his work against Marcion, no doubt thrilled through Christendom like an electric shock, as they were repeated from one to another, in substance at least, from the banks of the Tigris on the

cast, to the British Channel on the west, it may be far beyond, by Christian Roman soldiers as they conversed beside the watch-fires at the Frith of Forth.

‘We confess,’ he says, ‘that a kingdom has been promised to us upon the earth, before heaven indeed, though in another state. It will be after the Resurrection for a thousand years, in the city of divine workmanship, the Jerusalem that is let down from heaven, the city which the Apostle describes as our Mother which is above. Of this he declares that our conversation, he means our citizenship, is in heaven. We can see that he speaks of it as being in very truth a celestial city. It was of this city Ezekiel had knowledge. This was the city the Apostle John beheld. And according to our belief, the word of the New Prophecy testifies of it, declaring that there should be a picture of it, exhibited to view, for a sign before its manifestation. The prophecy had a fulfilment but very recently during an expedition to the East. It is certain from the testimony of even heathen witnesses, that there was in Judæa a city seen suspended in the sky, in the early morning, morning by morning, for the space of forty days, the fashion of whose walls the beholders might trace. As the day advanced the picture of the city waned away, though sometimes it would vanish in a moment. We say that this city has been provided by God for the reception of the saints after their resurrection, for their refreshment with the abundance of all truly spiritual goods, as a recompense for those which in this world they have despised, or lost. For it is only just and worthy of God, that in the same place where His servants have suffered affliction for His Name’s sake, there also should they rejoice.’

This quotation is sufficient for our purpose. It shows plainly that whether the Millenarians, as a body, were

Montanists, the Montanists were, without any doubt, Millenarians.

And now how wondrously the light breaks forth upon us as to the state of parties in the Primitive Church, their relations to each other, and the clash and conflict of opinion amongst these early followers of the Lord Jesus, who, differ as fiercely as they might amongst themselves, yet in one thing were all agreed—their burning love for Him, and their readiness to lay down their lives by the sword, or flame, or wild beasts for the love of Him. And it is enough for us to know that they are with Him now where He is, and shall be with Him for ever: and that all who love may be with Him and with them, and so that this may be, whether it be on earth, or whether it be in heaven, matters indeed nothing, for all loving souls know that love is Heaven.

Bearing then in mind the *data* of facts which we have to go upon, we can understand why Caius of Rome, who had the controversy with the Montanist Proclus, should be the one early ecclesiastical writer of note who seems to have rejected the Revelation.

In this celebrated discussion, Caius, as Eusebius tells us, ‘severely rebuked the rashness and daring of his opponents in composing new Scriptures. He makes mention of only thirteen Epistles of the holy Apostle, for he does not include the Epistle to the Hebrews.’ ‘Indeed up to this time, it is not considered by some among the Romans to be a work of the Apostle.’

Knowing what we do, can there be a moment’s hesitation in concluding that the Apocalypse was one of these new Scriptures, which Caius accused the Montanists of fabricating, or at least, if it had been forged by Kerinthus, or some one else, of valuing and appealing to it?

The Roman Church, notwithstanding Caius, never rejected this Book. The strong Montanist element at Rome, added to the great personal influence of Irenæus, no doubt saved her from such a step.

We are now also in a position to understand the action of that Council of Laodiceæ which has been such a puzzle for ages. It was simply a very determined effort of the hierarchical party to put down all opposition to their proceedings; and to do this it was necessary to crush the Montanists. After the bishops, who met at Laodiceæ, had done what lay in their power to put down Montanism, they wound up their proceedings by deliberately rejecting the Revelation. This was to be expected.

A short analysis of a few of the sixty Canons of this Council enables us to discover the spirit by which it was actuated, and the object which it had in view.

The very first Canon shows the difficulty which confronted the Council. The task which it undertook was to put down Montanism, by altering the discipline of the Church in Asia Minor. And they effected their object by, on the one hand, relaxing a presumed moral obligation, and on the other, by drawing more tightly the cords of ecclesiastical, or episcopal government.

Studying these sixty Canons as a whole, charity itself can scarcely believe that in their toleration of second marriages, the Laodicean prelates were actuated solely by the desire of establishing and confirming Christian liberty. If such had been the case, we could have better sympathized with them. The Canons, however, will speak for themselves.

‘ We decree that according to the ecclesiastical rule, those who have been freely and lawfully joined together in a second marriage, and have not contracted a secret marriage, shall, after a short time has elapsed, and they

have had leisure for prayer and fasting, receive the Communion, as *an act of grace.*'¹

There is not so much as the faint echo of a note of Christian freedom here. If there had been, the right of believers to contract a second marriage after the departure of their husbands or wives, would have been boldly and fearlessly asserted. But it is very different. The Communion is only to be given after a time, after what looks like an appointed penance of prayers and fastings, and even then merely as a concession, a favour, an act of grace and forgiveness. If a second marriage were contrary to the law of Christ, why did they not say so, and treat it as a sin, as the Montanists did, with perfect consistency, because they honestly, though erroneously, believed it to be a sin. If, on the other hand, they thought it was in accordance with the law of Christ, then why did they not openly say so, instead of ordering a temporary excommunication.

The prelates then, like prelates in all ages, seem to have been utterly incapable of any open, large-hearted policy. But the reasons why they acted as they did are obvious enough. They wished to attract those whom the severer Montanist discipline repelled: and having caught them, they wished to bind them, hand and foot, in subjection to the episcopal yoke by enmeshing them in the infinite intricacies of the Canon Law.

The seventh and eighth Canons are very useful in showing the extreme hatred against the Montanists by which the Council was actuated. The former decides that heretics generally need not be rebaptized. 'It shall

¹ Δεῖν κατὰ τὸν ἐκκλησιαστικὸν κανόνα τοὺς ἐλευθέρως καὶ νομίμως συναφθέντας δευτέρους γάμους μὴ λαθρογαμίαν ποιήσαντας ὀλίγου χρόνου προελθόντος καὶ σχολασάντων ταῖς προσευχαῖς καὶ νηστείας κατὰ συγγνώμην ἀποδεῖσθαι αὐτοῖς τὴν κοινωνίαν ὥρισamen.

suffice that they be instructed in Christian doctrine and anointed with the chrism, and so admitted to Holy Communion.' In this Canon no exceptions of any heretics are specified.

But the eighth, or following Canon decrees, that if a Montanist should come over to their party, 'he should, even though he were a chief minister, be most carefully catechised and baptized by the bishops and presbyters of the Church.'¹ That means, in other words, a Montanist bishop must be treated as an absolute Pagan. This indeed is exactly the manner in which a Roman Catholic bishop of the present day would treat an Anglican bishop. For amid all the changes and chances of this changeful state, theological bitterness seems to be one of the very few things which remain unchangeable.

There is one thing which ecclesiastics, speaking generally, will always be found to hate worse than heterodoxy, and that is opposition to hierarchical aggrandisement. Hence it was, that the Council of Laodicea admitted the baptism of Gnostics, Enekratites, Marcionites, Manichees, and the rest, but rejected that of the Montanists. But then the Montanists had been guilty of the irremissible sin of opposition to episcopal domination.

The eleventh Canon is of especial importance for understanding the position of the Montanist female episcopate.

'Those women who are called presbyters, even though they be presidents, must not be appointed in the Church.'²

¹ Τοὺς ἀπὸ τῆς αἵρέσεως τῶν λεγομένων Φρυγῶν ἐπιστρέφοντας εἰ καὶ ἐν κλήρῳ νομιζομένῳ παρ' αὐτοῖς τυγχάνουσιν, εἰ καὶ μέγιστοι λέγοντο· τοὺς τοιούτους μετὰ πάσης ἐπιμελείας κατηχεῖσθαι τε καὶ βαπτίζεσθαι ὑπὸ τῶν τῆς ἐκκλησίας ἐπισκόπων τε καὶ πρεσβυτέρων.

² Μὴ δεῖν τὰς λεγομένας πρεσβυτέας ἢτοι προκαθημένας ἐν ἐκκλησίᾳ καθίστασθαι. It will be seen that the Greek admits of several different shades of meaning. The later use of ἦτοι is very uncertain.

If we take it as an axiom of ecclesiastical legislation, that all Canons have been enacted for the purpose of putting a stop to some abuse, or supposed abuse, the inference to be drawn from this Canon is simply irresistible. In some parts of Asia Minor, female presbyters must have been allowed to preside over Churches which were, at the time, in communion with the Catholic Church, or perhaps even over branches of the Catholic Church herself. Such a practice is forbidden for the time to come.

It would occupy too much time to enter into a full analysis of the decrees of this Synod. It is sufficient to observe that it is a very important landmark in the history of that process which has been going on ever since the beginning of the third century, perhaps before, by which the blessed freedom of the flock of our Lord Jesus Christ was at last taken away, and all were reduced to a slavery, worse than that Jewish bondage from which the Saviour had come to deliver His people, the slavery of subjection to Canon Law.

And now having seen how the bishops at Laodicæa manifested their hatred of the Montanists, it only remains to notice how they supplemented this dislike by rejecting the Apocalypse. The two things went hand in hand.

The fifty-ninth Canon forbids any Book to be read in churches except the Canonical Scriptures. And the sixtieth and last Canon proceeds to enumerate all the Canonical Books of the Old and New Testament. In the list

The general sense, however, seems to be as given above. How Labbè, whose learning and diligence were so great, could imagine that these bishopesses and priestesses were so called because they were the wives of bishops and priests is very strange. They were unquestionably Montanist clergywomen. And the very expression, *μη δεῖν ἐν ἐκκλησίᾳ καθίστασθαι*, shows that it was forbidden *for the future* to allow them to occupy Catholic episcopal sees.

of the latter, every Book which is now received as Canonical by all Christian Churches is enumerated, with the solitary exception of the Book of Revelation. And as these two Canons must be taken in connection with each other, it follows that they forbid the Apocalypse, or any portion of it to be read in the Church.

If then there be an awful truth involved in these solemn words at the close of the rejected Book—‘I testify unto every man that heareth the words of the prophecy of this book, that if any man shall take away from the words of the book of this prophecy, God shall take away his part out of the book of life, and out of the holy city, and from the things which are written in this book,’ what must be the terrible fate of those Laodicæan bishops, who cast the Revelation out of the Church altogether, and forbade it to be read therein, as though it had been an unclean thing? So much for the united wisdom, moderation and piety of the Synods of the fourth century when they met to legislate for their brethren and sisters in Christ.

And the misery and the mischief do not end with the Council of Laodicæa itself. Its Canons, which regulate many important points of ecclesiastical discipline, ‘have been received by the whole Church, and have been put into the Code of the Canons of the Universal Church.’

If it be urged that the determination of the Canon of Scripture is not a matter of discipline, there can be no doubt that it is purely a question of discipline to lay down what Books shall and what shall not be used in churches. And the fifty-ninth Canon does, by the clearest implication, forbid the reading of the Apocalypse.

This was the first budding germ of that spirit which in after ages forbade the reading of the Scriptures by the people, even in their own private houses. If we wish to discover the original springs and sources of ecclesiastical

tyranny, and the violation of the rights of conscience, we must go back far beyond mediæval times, beyond the era of forged Decretals. We shall come upon them in reviewing the Decrees of many an early Synod.

The Canons are the milestones by which we may trace the all-devouring march of the locustine army of exclusive sacerdotalism : and the anathemas of the Councils are the pæans which the Bishops sung over the crushed and expiring liberties of the hapless family of God. If we look at the Church of Christ as she was when the last of the Apostles left the world, and again as she was by about the middle of the fifth century, when she lay, after all her struggles, panting and bleeding, beneath the iron heel of episcopal despotism, we might adopt the words of the evangelical prophet, and say—‘How, alas! is the gold become dross, and the fine gold changed!’

And let no Christian delude himself with the idea that the spirit which led to all this mischief is extinct. The love of having the dominion, the desire of pre-eminence, of bearing rule over the brethren is just as essentially inherent in all hierarchies now, in the nineteenth century, as it was in the Eastern hierarchy of the fourth and fifth.

After the Montanists and some other opponents were disposed of, the whole unscriptural, unchristlike system grew and flourished more and more. Christ said—‘Swear not at all, and Bless them which curse you.’ Yet everything has been welded together by the oaths of what is called canonical obedience, and by the anathemas of Synods. Bishops exact an oath of obedience from presbyters, metropolitans from bishops, patriarchs from metropolitans, the Pope from all. Anglican bishops have, it is true, refused to take an oath to obey the Pope, yet they themselves still rigidly exact obedience upon oath from their fellow presbyters. And Christendom pleads

with Him by Whose sacred Name she is called—‘How long, O Lord! how long!’ When shall this nightmare which has brooded over her, this incubus which has oppressed her, through all the weary centuries, be banished and driven away for ever by the holy Advent of the one, only true Shepherd and Bishop of all Christian souls?

The last example of hatred of the Montanists, and rejection of the *Apocalypse* being found in unison, which need be adduced, is that of St. Cyril of Jerusalem. His dreadful falsehoods, of which even his admirers appear to be ashamed, have been noticed already. It only remains to speak of his rejection of the *Revelation*.

He excludes it from the Canon of the New Testament;¹ and goes further by implication than even the Council of *Laodicæa*; for after enumerating the books which he looked upon as Canonical, he says—‘What is not read in the churches, that read not by thyself, according as thou hast heard.’

But it was not sufficient for him to reject it. He is thought to have even treated it with contumely. He has been speaking of the reign of Antichrist, which he adds shall only last for three years and a half. ‘We speak,’ he says, ‘not from Apocryphal books, but from Daniel.’ Under the designation of Apocryphal books he is supposed to include the *Apocalypse*.²

Apart from all critical considerations, the *Revelation* of John the Theologian would, we may feel sure, be a work very precious to all Montanist Christians. The wonderful meekness and gentleness of their founders would lead them to delight in the thought of Jesus as the Lamb standing on the height of Sion surrounded by all lamb-like

¹ Catechet. sect. iv. 32.

² C. L. xv. 16.

souls, and yet that He was the Lion of the tribe of Judah, mighty to deliver all His people.

When we remember all the bitter things which were said of Maximilla, and the cruel things which were done to her, we shall feel, it may be, that hers was one of the gentlest spirits which the Catholic Church has ever produced. She whose worst speech, as reported by her enemies, was, 'I am chased like a wolf from the fold, and yet I am not a wolf.' No! meek Montanist prophetess, indeed thou wast no wolf! thou gavest all thy goods to feed the poor, from love to Christ: and if justice be never done thee upon earth, it will be done thee at the Judgment Day. The bishops of Asia might chase thee, as bishops have chased many another from the earthly fold, but their keys would not suffice to lock thee, or any other loving, gentle soul out of the fold above.

Next to a very practical belief in the Holy Ghost as for ever dwelling with the Church, as the promised Comforter, to guide and lead Christians throughout all days into the fulness of truth and of spiritual privileges, the most distinguishing characteristic of early Montanism seems to have been an intense personal love for Christ, as being Himself a real, living, personal Saviour. The Montanists may have made mistakes in supposing that they had the gift of prophecy, they may have been too harsh in telling grievous Christian sinners that they must not hope for restoration to the Church on earth, but must apply all their energies to obtain God's forgiveness, and direct all their hopes towards admission in God's good time into the Church above; but there was no mistake in the intensity of the love which they bore to a personal Redeemer.

Not in the exact words perhaps, but in spirit at least, theirs' would be the breathing forth of that prayer so dear

to the inmost heart of the Catholic Church in every age—

Come, Holy Ghost, our souls inspire,
And lighten with celestial fire.

But above all, exposed as they were to the terrible persecutions of the heathen, to the contempt and occasional oppression and injustice of their fellow-Christians, the words which they could best make their own, the words which would in fullest measure express their peculiar frame of mind, the words which would strike home to their very hearts, would be those with which the Revelation concludes—words spoken from heaven to earth, words echoed back from earth to heaven: ‘Surely, I come quickly: Amen. Even so, come, Lord Jesus. The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you all. Amen.’

APPENDICES.

APPENDIX A.

On the troubles which arose in the Church of Alexandria, consequent upon the changes in its form of Church Government, forced upon it, in the third and fourth centuries.

THOSE who are familiar with the troubles and discords with which the history of the Episcopate of St. Athanasius of Alexandria is but too full, are aware that these names incessantly recur—Meletius, Colluthus, Ischyrras. They are given here in chronological order. Meletius is called, as we have seen by St. Epiphanius, an archbishop of the Thebais. What may be the exact meaning of the title archbishop, as applied to Meletius, it is now impossible to determine. But this is allowed on all hands, that he was an Egyptian ecclesiastic, who claimed the right to ordain, or constitute bishops, and to consecrate priests. By a loose method of speaking, which has arisen in consequence of mistaken ideas about the Christian Ministry, it has become common, in later ages, to speak of consecrating a bishop, and ordaining a priest. In almost all primitive writers the word applied to the making of bishops is, constituting, or appointing them.

The character of Meletius is given by different writers, according to their respective prejudices, and with as much variation as there is between an angel of light and a demon of darkness.

Dr. J. M. Neale says, ‘he was a cause of scandal on account of the crimes of which he was suspected, and at length in some local persecution, or perhaps popular insurrection, he renounced the faith, and sacrificed to idols.’ There is no particular authority for this harsh judgment of Meletius, except that of his persecutor St. Athanasius: so that it must be taken for what it is worth. Epiphanius, on the other hand, speaks of him as a holy Confessor, as perfectly orthodox in his faith, and as having rendered the inestimable service to the Catholic

Church of being the first to detect the lurking heresy of Arius. This testimony of Epiphanius, whose unbounded zeal in the cause of orthodoxy no human being ever doubted, is sought to be weakened by the assertion that he was misled, unconsciously, by Meletian documents. But for this supposition there appears to be no ground whatever, beyond a vivid imagination. Certainly it is the easiest of all methods of disposing of an inconvenient statement.

But we are not now dealing with the personal character of Meletius, but with what he did in an official capacity: and so far as this is concerned, it appears that his power to ordain bishops, or priests, was never denied. Any how, he did ordain a considerable number of bishops, and a few presbyters and deacons, whose names, in accordance with the decree of the Synod of Nice, were given in to the Patriarch of Alexandria, and were by him acknowledged to be those of true bishops and priests.

St. Athanasius, a most prejudiced witness, thus describes what took place, in accordance with the Synodical Decree of Nicæa. 'When Meletius was admitted to communion—would that he had never been so admitted!—the blessed Alexander, who knew his craftiness, required of him a catalogue of the bishops, whom he said he had in Egypt, and of the presbyters and deacons that were in Alexandria itself, and if he had any in the country adjoining. This the Pope Alexander did, lest Meletius, assuming full liberty of action in the Church, should sell ordination to many, and thus continually, by a fraudulent procedure, put in whatever ministers he pleased. Accordingly he made out the following catalogue of those in Egypt.'¹

There follows, 1. A list of twenty-seven or twenty-eight names, the whole being those of bishops who had been consecrated by Meletius for the provinces of Egypt, without containing the name of one single presbyter: and, 2. A list of five presbyters and four deacons, ordained for the city of Alexandria, or its suburbs.

Now the evidence afforded by the statement of Athanasius

¹ St. Athanas., *Histor. Tracts*: Oxf. Trans. 101, 102.

and this list of the Meletian clergy is most important. Meletius was ordered to give in a list of the bishops and priests whom he had ordained. He complies by giving in twenty-seven bishops, outside of Alexandria: but does not name one single presbyter. Now unless it be supposed that Meletius had ordained all these bishops in the later meaning of the title, without one solitary presbyter for them to oversee and govern, which would be absurd, it follows as an absolutely irrefragable conclusion, that in the opinion of everybody concerned, Athanasius himself, Meletius, the Œcumenical Council of Nice, for all practical purposes a bishop and a presbyter were absolutely one and the same, that when Meletius was said to have ordained a presbyter he was considered to have ordained a bishop, and that there was no distinction between the two except in name, and very often not even in that. And this clearly and perfectly explains why Meletius is said to have ordained none but bishops, *outside* of Alexandria, none but presbyters *within*. Where there was but one presbyter in the place, he was called or considered a bishop; where there were more than one, the first in rank (whether rank were reckoned according to seniority, or in some other way) was usually styled the bishop, the rest the presbyters. And thus we see how this primitive constitutional government of the Church had not become entirely obsolete in Egypt until well nigh the middle of the fourth century.¹

Thus much for Meletius and his ordinations in the time of St. Alexander. Meletius himself henceforth disappears, at least as an object of controversy. Not so with his followers. No name occurs more constantly in the history of the Arian troubles than theirs.

We may fairly suppose, that when a compromise was effected by the Council of Nice, by which it was provided that Meletius

¹ There is a passage in St. Athanasius' own Apology against the Arians, which incidentally, and therefore strongly, confirms this. 'Who are they,' he asks, 'that availing themselves of external support, conspire against the bishops?' And he immediately proceeds to speak of *four presbyters* of Alexandria, who had been banished by their means—that is, by means of the Eusebian party. St. Ath., *Hist. Tracts*, Oxf. Trans. p. 35.

should enjoy the bare¹ title of bishop, but should cease from ordaining in future, and that the clergy whom he had already ordained—Sozomen² does not say whether they were bishops or presbyters—should take the second rank after the other clergy, and be capable of succeeding them; it was understood, that these Meletian bishops and presbyters should surcease from ordinations, as well as Meletius himself.

To enforce this, however, in practice, must have been beyond measure difficult. And so the event proved. When Meletius retires, another name comes prominently forward; that of Colluthus. He is first heard of in the list of Meletian bishops already spoken of, as of Upper Cynus, in the Thebais. We next hear of him as separating himself from the communion of St. Alexander, and taking upon himself to ordain presbyters, on account of what he held to be the sinful laxity of Alexander in dealing with the Arians. The terms in which Alexander speaks of him, in his letter to his namesake of Constantinople, are most remarkable.³

‘Arius and Achillas having lately conspired together, whilst they strove to imitate the ambition of Colluthus, have far surpassed him, in the nature of their wickedness. He indeed, although he endeavoured to reprove those very things which they did, seemed to have some semblance at least of a cause for what he did wrong. But they, when they perceived that traffic of his by which he sold Christ Himself, would no longer endure to be subject to the laws of the Church, but constructed dens of robbers for themselves.’

The language of St. Alexander is obscure enough, but reading it by the light brought to bear upon it by subsequent events, it seems tolerably clear that he brings against Colluthus the charges of insubordination, of breaking the disciplinary Canons of the Church, and of doing what we have seen St. Athanasius subsequently accused Meletius himself of having done, selling ordination for money. It is also clear that St. Alexander thought lightly of the offence of Colluthus, whatever it was, compared with the guilt of Arius; and it is still further evident to any one who will weigh the whole evidence

¹ *Διότι*.² Sozomen, H. E. i. 24.³ Theodoret, H. E. i. 3.

in a candid spirit, that if there had been no question of simony, the irregularity of Colluthus in conferring Orders would have been easily condoned. It will, of course, be said by the advocates of Episcopacy, that it is not certain that Colluthus, the Meletian bishop, and Colluthus, the ordaining presbyter, are one and the same person. This is true; but it is as nearly certain as any historical fact well can be. And for this reason. The whole narrative of the troubles in which St. Athanasius was involved, arising out of his alleged actions in the Mareotis, into which this is no place to enter, prove that Colluthus was an ecclesiastic belonging to the Meletian party. But as all parties allowed Colluthus to be a presbyter, and as Meletius had ordained but one Colluthus, which is matter of certainty, it follows that Colluthus, the Meletian bishop, and Colluthus, the Meletian presbyter, were most probably one and the same. I am not forgetful that the Meletian list calls him of Cynus in the Thebais, and that Epiphanius speaks of him as connected with a Church in Alexandria. But nothing is more natural than that he should have removed from one place to the other. Meletian clergymen will be found in the history of this schism, to turn up in much more unlikely places than in Alexandria. Certainly on the face of things the identity of the two is the most natural supposition. And if they were two different persons, it may reasonably be asked, who then was Colluthus, the Meletian Presbyter, and from whence came he?¹

Again, the only meaning which can well be attached to Alexander's admission, that Colluthus had some semblance of a cause for what he did, is that he was a Meletian presbyter-bishop, and therefore, that though he acted irregularly in ordaining at all, and sinfully, if he ordained for money, still his ordinations would be valid.

And now let us see what it was that Colluthus did do, which has rendered his name a prominent one in the history of the Church. This shall be told first in the words of a strong partisan of the modern theory of Episcopacy, Dr. J. M. Neale,

¹ The careful student will notice in reading Epiphanius, that he speaks of Meletius himself as belonging to two different places

the historian of the Church of Alexandria ; and shall then be given from the original documents.

‘On the arrival of Hosius in Alexandria A.D. 325, a Council was held, the Acts of which have unfortunately perished. It only appears that Arius was excommunicated afresh ; that the Meletians were condemned anew ; and that Colluthus and his partisans were summoned before the Synod. His assumed power of ordination was derided as an unheard-of novelty :—those on whom he had laid hands (and among them, the afterwards notorious Ischyras) were reduced to the rank of laymen ; but both the schismatic, and the greater part of his followers, were, on their recantation, admitted to the communion of the Church.’

Now for a great part of this statement there is no foundation whatever, except imagination. The assumed power of ordination is *not* spoken of as a novelty, it is *not* derided, *no* action whatever was taken with regard to *Ischyras* in the Council, and so far as we can tell, the Orders conferred by Colluthus were not pronounced invalid *by the Council*, and the inference that they were invalid was only drawn by some strong partisans of St. Athanasius, several years afterwards. ‘This is very melancholy,’ as Dr. Neale himself observes about Baronius, when animadverting upon an attempt of that great Annalist to make a point for the Pope’s Primacy, not warranted by the evidence. But it is a remarkable fact, that there is a certain school of writers, who, the moment any question affecting Episcopacy is raised, fairly lose their heads, and become incapable of testing evidence.

Our chief, or rather our entire knowledge of the Acts of the Council of Alexandria is derived from some very warm friends of Athanasius in the Mareotis. His Arian and Meletian adversaries had brought an accusation against him, containing, amongst other things, the allegation that he had disturbed a Meletian priest during the celebration of the Holy Mysteries, and had been the cause of a sacred Chalice being broken. This accusation was apparently false, and the friends of Athanasius disprove it in various ways. We are only concerned with one—that in which they say, that a sacred Chalice could not have been broken, because the person, Ischyras, who it was said was

using it in offering the mystic Sacrifice, was never a priest at all. And this they proceed to show in the following manner.

‘When Theognis, Maris, and the rest, as sent by all the bishops who were assembled at Tyre, met together in our Diocese, they asserted that they had been directed to institute an enquiry . . . concerning a Chalice of the Lord which had been broken. This false accusation was made by one Ischyrras, who calls himself a presbyter, but who is not a presbyter; for he was appointed ¹ by the presbyter Colluthus, who pretended to the Episcopate,² and was afterwards ordered in a general Synod by Hosius and those ³ who were with him, to be a presbyter as he was before; and by consequence,⁴ all who were appointed by Colluthus went back to their own position in which they previously were; and so Ischyrras himself was seen to be a layman.’⁵

Thus we see that all that can be said with absolute certainty as to the action of the Synod under Hosius, supposing this Letter of the Presbyters of the Mareotis to speak the truth about it, was, that Colluthus was ordered to be a presbyter as as he was before. All the rest is either *ex parte* statement of the adherents of St. Athanasius, made years after the Synod had broken up, or else, inferences which they themselves drew from the only thing determined, according to their own statement, by the Synod, with respect to Colluthus; for it is only bare justice to those ancient advocates of Episcopacy to say, that it is not they, but Dr. Neale, who asserts that things were done by the Synod, which the Synod did not do. Never perhaps were stronger statements based upon less evidence than those of Dr.

¹ Κατεστάθη.

² Φαντασθέντος ἐπισκοπῆν.

³ The Oxford Translation in the Library of the Fathers here inserts ‘bishops,’ but without authority.

⁴ Κατὰ ἀκολουθίαν.

⁵ Labbé, Concilia, tom. ii. p. 960. I have preferred this account of the ordination of Ischyrras to another, which is given in a Letter written by a Council of Bishops assembled at Alexandria, in favour of Athanasius, though the two accounts do not materially differ. See Oxf. Lib. of the Fathers. St. Athanasius’ Hist. Tracts, p. 30.

Neale upon the action of the Synod of Alexandria in the matter of Colluthus.

And now having seen what was not the truth, let us see if we can ascertain what the truth probably was. And this is a much more difficult matter. We know that about this time the Church throughout the world was becoming much more strict in confining ordination to the heads of the Presbyteral Colleges, that is to the presbyters who were beginning to be called, *par excellence*, bishops, than she had ever been before. This is shown by the Council of Ancyra, and in many other ways. It was done, not from any formal denial of the original right of all presbyters to ordain, as well as to exercise what were then considered much higher priestly functions, such as the celebration of the Eucharist, and the administration of Baptism, but as a disciplinary measure to preserve unity. It was felt that with the vast extension of the Church's boundaries, it was necessary to devise some means to check that centrifugal tendency which began more and more to develope itself; and no more effectual method of doing this seemed to present itself, than to restrict the power of admitting to the priesthood to a comparatively small number of individuals.

The idea of what has been called the doctrine of Apostolic Succession is very late indeed. By that idea, I suppose is to be understood the theory, that a certain class of men have the power of transmitting from generation to generation certain spiritual functions and gifts: and that this power of conferring Orders is something distinct from the right to do so: so that if a heretic, or schismatic bishop ordains certain persons to be bishops or priests, these persons will be real bishops or priests, in spite of their ordainer being separate from the communion of the Catholic Church.

When this extraordinary idea first took definite shape, I am unable to say, but it may be safely affirmed that in the very early times there is not so much as a hint of such an idea. The whole teaching of St. Cyprian is as much opposed to such a theory as anything possibly can be. He would have suffered a thousand deaths rather than admit for a moment that any spiritual act, performed by one who was out of communion with the Catholic Church, had any validity whatever. The

denials of the Orders of Arian bishops and priests, with which the history of these times abounds, all point in the same direction.

There is then every reason to think, that whilst the presbyters of other Churches submitted for the most part quietly to the restriction of their original rights, as it was represented to them that it would be for the benefit of the entire Christian family, that thus it should be, the Egyptian priesthood was less complaisant. They made a great stand for their ancient rights, and opposed a stubborn resistance to the innovating attempts of the patriarchs. And thus it was, that for generation after generation, the history of the Evangelical See, as the Church of Alexandria was called, became one unvarying record of wild disorder and miserable confusion. We may fairly suppose that such presbyters as Colluthus were honestly unable to understand the meaning of this new teaching about confining certain functions of the Christian Priesthood to the Episcopate. There had always been felt throughout the whole of Egypt, Libya, the Pentapolis, and the neighbouring countries, unbounded veneration for the Head of the Presbyteral College of Alexandria. No one wished to question his privileges, or thought of doing so. Wherever he went, he enforced discipline, visited churches and monasteries, ordained clergymen, and everyone submitted cheerfully to his authority. But it was very different with these upstart bishops, upstart that is, not in name, but in office and power.

The Egyptian clergy could understand that certain presbyters, venerable for age, or for confession of Christ before the heathen persecutors, or occupying a prominent position on account of being the first presbyters of some important city, should be dignified with the title of bishop, or archbishop, or anything the patriarch pleased. But that these dignified presbyters should assume a lordship over God's heritage, that they should assert a claim to rule over their brethren in the presbytery, that they should arrogate to themselves the exclusive right of ordaining and appointing ministers, was what had never been hitherto heard of in the Egyptian Church; and those stout-hearted men felt that it was a bounden duty which they owed both to Christ and His people not to submit

to it. Thus we see explained the origin of these troubles in which the names of Meletians, Colluthians, and Ischyrians, are perpetually occurring during the Pontificates of Alexander and Athanasius—troubles occasioned not by men who were heretics, but maintainers of their rights. And of these troubles the Arians were not slow to take advantage, to promote their own ends, which were of a very different character.

The sequel of the history of Ischyras is instructive. His Orders, though denied by the Athanasians, as we have seen, were fully admitted by the Arians. And after being acknowledged by them to be a true presbyter, they proceeded to dignify him with the title of bishop. Nothing can be more instructive and conclusive than the narrative of this transaction as related by Athanasius himself. He says that the Arians bestowed upon Ischyras the title of bishop, as the price of his false testimony. He proceeds, ‘The Mareotis, as I have already said, is a district of Alexandria, in which there has never been, either a bishop, or a chorepiscopus; but the Churches of the whole district are subject to the Bishop of Alexandria, and each presbyter has under his charge one of the largest villages, which are about ten in number. Now the village in which Ischyras lives, is a very small one, and possesses so few inhabitants, that there has never been a church built there, but only in the adjoining village. Nevertheless, they determined, contrary to ancient usage, to nominate a bishop for this place, and not only so, but even to appoint a man who was not so much as a presbyter.

‘Notwithstanding this, he has no church, nor a people to obey him, but is scouted by them all like a dog; although the Arians have caused the Emperor to write to the Receiver-General (for everything is in their power) commanding that a church should be built for him, that being possessed of that, his statement may appear credible about the Chalice. They caused him immediately to be nominated a bishop, because, if he were without a church, and not even a presbyter, he would appear to be a false accuser. Nevertheless, he possesses but an empty title, since he has no people, and even his own relations are not obedient to him.’

From this statement several things become clearly apparent.

The Orders conferred by the presbyter Colluthus are acknowledged as valid by the entire Arian party, numbering at this period several hundred bishops. Then, Ischyra who had been ordained presbyter by Colluthus is nominated, or appointed a bishop. But a bishop of what? There is not the faintest idea of his being made a bishop in the modern sense of being set over other presbyters. Even St. Athanasius does not allege this. He is nominated, or styled a bishop, evidently as a title of honour, as it was beginning then to be generally regarded. He is not made bishop even of these ten villages of the Mareotis, as would have been the very least that would have been done, had modern ideas about episcopacy, at that time, had any existence. Instead of this, being as the Arians alleged, the presbyter of a hamlet in the Mareotis, he is henceforth to be styled a bishop. It must be carefully borne in mind that we are now reviewing a transition period, when a tremendous internal struggle was going on in Egypt and the East. It was a period when the powers and privileges of bishops were increasing every year, when the noble struggles of such men as Colluthus were growing fainter and fainter, when the party of innovation was advancing slowly but most surely to the victory which they finally obtained over the principles which had guided and influenced the Primitive Church in her method of government.

And the advocates of modern Episcopacy cannot reply, that the title of bishop given to Ischyra by the Arians was an empty honour conferred upon him, simply with the view of annoying St. Athanasius: but that they themselves did not really believe him to be a true bishop. Providentially we may say, the fact has been preserved by Socrates,¹ that this very Ischyra was one of the seventy-six Eastern bishops who assembled at the Council of Sardica. And now there is not a hint about the invalidity of his Orders. Socrates indeed, who comes later than St. Athanasius, makes him a territorial bishop, calling him the Bishop of the Mareotis. But it is reasonable to suppose that St. Athanasius would be better informed than Socrates upon such a point as this. Anyhow, viewing the whole

¹ H. E. ii. 20.

matter in every possible light, it is difficult to see how anything could be much more damaging to the cause of the defenders of Episcopacy being a distinct Order, in the proper sense of the word, and of what is called Apostolical succession. Most wonderful indeed is it that the dark cloud which has settled over these far-off ages, should lift for a moment, and disclose to us this ancient bishop ordained by a presbyter, and yet recognized by half the Christian Church. Can any one assure us that this case of Ischyra is a solitary one, a case which had no precedent, an example which was never followed? Has anyone clear enough vision to pierce through the darkness, and tell us that Ischyra and such as he never laid hands upon any of the spiritual ancestors of the present Prelates of Christendom? Alas! indeed for the Catholic Church of Christ, the Bride of the Lamb, if her very all, if the life-blood flowing in her veins, if her Priesthood and her Sacraments, if the eternal weal or woe of her countless children, depend upon whether certain external, manual acts were always duly, or unduly performed during all the bitter strife, lasting for at least a century, which marked the Arian controversy.

APPENDIX B.

It is impossible to say how early the falsification of history, and of historical documents in the interest of Episcopacy may have commenced; but probably as early as the middle of the third century, or about the time when such persistent, and at last successful efforts were made, to change bishops who had been previously *primi inter pares*, and Chairmen of the Presbytery, into 'prelates who were lords over God's heritage.'

The first instance which I have found of apparently deliberate falsification, is in the translation of the Greek Text of the 13th Canon of the Council of Ancyra, which was held about A.D. 314. The original runs thus—Χωρεπισκόποις μὴ ἐξεῖναι πρεσβυτέρους ἢ διακόνους χειροτονεῖν, ἀλλὰ μηδὲ πρεσβυτέροις πόλεως, χωρὶς τοῦ ἐπιτραπῆναι ὑπὸ τοῦ ἐπισκόπου μετὰ γραμμάτων, ἐν ἐτέρᾳ παροικίᾳ.¹

¹ It has been too hastily assumed, that *παροικία* here, and elsewhere in the Greek Canons and other ecclesiastical documents, means Diocese in the modern sense. But this is by no means quite clear. At least there is a passage in Socrates where, if *παροικία* does not mean Parish, in the modern sense, it would tend to show that every Parish was a Diocese, and so by implication every presbyter a bishop. Socrates is speaking of the District of the Marcotis, in Egypt. 'It contains many villages, and in them are many fine Churches.' Τάττονται δὲ αὐταὶ αἱ ἐκκλήσιναι ὑπὸ τῷ τῆς Ἀλεξανδρείας ἐπισκόπῳ, καὶ εἰσιν ὑπὸ τὴν αὐτοῦ πόλιν ὡς παροικίαι. (Socrates II. E. i. 27.) If this passage of Socrates be compared with the Canon of Ancyra, the meaning of *παροικία* will be, the place, or district in which a presbyter exercised his functions. And it will then appear plain that the object of this Canon, as well as of a good deal more of the disciplinary legislation of the fourth century was to reduce the clergy, both of the city and the neighbouring country, to subjection to one central authority in the great towns. And I am firmly convinced that the more this part of Church history is studied, the more clearly it will be seen, that there was no question of distinction of *Order* between presbyter and bishop involved in these Canons, simply because that particular distinction had not as yet been thought of by any one.

The translation of this is easy and simple enough—‘It shall not be lawful for Chorepiscopi to ordain presbyters, or deacons; nor even for the presbyters of a city (to do so), unless it (that is, such a work) be entrusted to them by the bishop, with letters in another diocese.’ Labbè, tom. i.

The meaning seems equally clear, that up to the passing of this Canon, both the Chorepiscopi, that is really the bishops, or presbyters in country places, and it is admitted by every one that the names of bishop and presbyter were used indifferently in the early Church, were in the habit of ordaining other presbyters, as well as deacons, at their own discretion: but that in future this right was to be wholly taken away from them, and though its exercise was still permitted to the city presbyters, as being, it would seem, of higher estimation than their rural brethren, it was henceforth to be placed under restrictions, they were not to ordain without the bishop’s licence; and when the ordination was to be in another parish or diocese, this licence of permission must be in writing. Labbè places a comma after *γραμμάτων*, and none after *ἐπισκόπου*. The sentence appears to me more easy of translation to reverse this, placing a comma after *ἐπ.*, and none after *γραμμ.*¹

Let us now see how the famous Dionysius Exiguus, (probably) in 525, translated this Canon of Ancyra into Latin, for the guidance of the whole Western Church, which, at that period, knew little, or nothing of the Greek original, nor indeed for eight, or nine centuries afterwards: ‘Chorepiscopis non licere presbyteros aut diaconos ordinare; sed nec presbyteris civitatis sine præcepto episcopi, vel literis in unaquaque parochia²

¹ A learned friend has suggested that *μετὰ γραμμ. ἐν ἑτέρᾳ παρ.* may qualify the whole Canon. This would make the ordination of priests and deacons, both by the Chorepiscopi, and the city presbyters dependent upon the verbal permission of the city bishop, in his own district, and upon his written permission in the district of another city bishop.

² Labbè in giving this Latin translation of Dion. Exiguus says, that the words from ‘aliquid imperare,’ inclusive, to the end, are not found in the Code of the Roman Church. This brings that Code into substantial agreement with the original Greek, and of course gives permission to the city presbyters to ordain other presbyters, with their

aliquid imperare, nec sine auctoritate literarum ejus in unaquaque parochia aliquid agere.' In English—It shall not be lawful for chorepiscopi to ordain priests and deacons; but neither is it lawful for the presbyters of the city to *order* anything in any parish (or diocese) whatsoever, without the command, or letters of the bishop; nor without the authority of his letters to do anything in any parish whatsoever.' This translation resulted in a successful attempt to change the apparent meaning of the Canon, as it stands in the Greek. One or two learned men of the present day appear to be of opinion that the meaning of this Canon of Ancyra in Greek is not very obvious. Dion. Exiguus did not think so, or he would have given a literal translation of it, as he has done of numberless other Greek Canons. But it is so utterly inconsistent and incompatible with the doctrine of Episcopacy, as then received, that it became absolutely necessary to dress up the Latin version, for the use of the Western Church. It is not pleasant to be obliged to bring such charges against ancient writers of reputation, but the truth must be spoken.¹

The trouble which this Canon of the Council of Ancyra gave to those who disliked its teaching has been immense. There

bishop's licence. This is an instance of what I have been often struck with, in the examination of ecclesiastical documents, the honesty of the Roman Church, so far as her own action is concerned.

Forgeries and falsifications have been perpetrated in abundance in her name, and by misguided men, to advance, as they supposed, her interests; but seldom, if ever, I believe, by herself. As to what Du Pin meant by saying that the forged addition to this Canon is found in the ancient Code of the Roman Church, published by Quesnel, it is only necessary to observe that neither Du Pin nor Quesnel are to be trusted in such points as this. Their object was to depress the power of the Popes by exalting that of the bishops. Possibly a good object, but not to be aimed at by unlawful means. Anyhow, no one, I suppose, would prefer the testimony of either Du Pin, or Quesnel, to that of Labbé.

¹ A careful collation of the various Latin versions of this Canon, makes it perhaps somewhat doubtful, whether the alteration of its sense is to be attributed to Dionysius, or to one of his numerous transcribers and imitators. This uncertainty makes no difference to the argument, but a great deal to Dionysius' reputation for honesty.

is another Latin translation of it by Isidore Mercator, and equally false with that of Dion. Exiguus :—

‘Vicariis Episcoporum quos Græci Chorepiscopos vocant non licere vel presbyteros,¹ vel diaconos ordinare; sed nec presbyteris civitatis sine episcopi præcepto amplius aliquid imperare, vel sine auctoritate literarum ejus in unaquaque parochia aliquid agere.’ The *amplius* here would seem to be barbarous Latin for, ‘in future.’ So that, by this translation the Canon is made to assert roundly, that *for the time to come, presbyters should not be allowed to do anything in any parish whatever without the authority of the bishop.* This is worthy of the Anglican Bingham.

The remarks of Du Pin upon this Canon are most instructive : ‘The 13th Canon is about suffragan bishops, or Chorepiscopi. It is as follows in the Greek text,—It is not lawful for suffragan bishops to ordain priests or deacons, nor for the city presbyters in another parish, without the permission of their bishop. It is plain that this Canon is imperfect, and that something must be supplied to make it sense. For what mean these words, “Nor to the city presbyters, &c.” Had priests ever power to ordain other priests in their own Churches? Had they ever permission to do it out of their own Churches by the bishop’s Letters? Why should not the suffragans, who were above the priests, have the same power? There must be something added. See what Dionysius Exiguus has added in his version—“No more is it lawful for priests to do anything in the diocese without the permission of the bishop in writing.” This addition is found in the ancient Code of the Roman Church, published by Quesnel, and in the Version of Isidore; and Justellus has restored it in the Greek text of the Code of the Universal Church.’ Du Pin, vol. ii. p. 249. Du Pin’s last sentence is a little obscure; but Justellus’s *restoration* appears really to have been an *alteration* of the Greek text of the Canon, to bring it into accordance with the Latin falsifications of Isidore and Dionysius. It is really most difficult for anyone who possesses a spark of honesty to restrain their indignation at such work as this. If the original Greek of the Canon had been

¹ A various reading omits ‘*vel Presbyteros.*’

lost, and we had only possessed its *restoration* by Justellus, falsehood would have finally, and not merely for a time have triumphed over truth. Du Pin falls into another mistake, let us hope in his case through inadvertence. He says that the Canon is imperfect and must have something supplied to make it sense—though the words are intelligible enough to any unbiassed mind—and then proceeds to refer to D. Exiguus as supplying this desirable addition. But if he had taken the trouble to compare Dionysius' Version with the Greek, he would have seen that what he did, was not fairly to translate into Latin, and then add an explanation, but so to change the Greek, as to make it convey a totally different meaning. The whole story is indeed very sad, and almost enough to make men distrust everything they find in Ecclesiastical History. The transaction may however, in the end, lead to good, for as 'the Canons of Ancyra were looked upon as rules that ought to be observed everywhere, since they have been put into the code of the Canons of the Universal Church,' the advocates of modern, as opposed to Primitive Episcopacy, may be safely challenged to prove, that a city presbyter, ordaining presbyters, or deacons, *in his own parish* would by such ordination, be doing anything which is forbidden by the Canons of the Universal Church. A section of the priesthood of the Anglican Church at the present day appears to be desirous of a revival of the study of Canon Law. Such a revival might certainly be productive of important results. But the Canons must be studied as a whole, and not superficially, nor yet with foregone conclusions about Episcopacy, or anything else.

About the same time that a successful attempt was made to take away the ancient right of the country bishops and the city presbyters, who, it is easy for even a child to see, belonged to the same Order, to ordain priests and deacons, an effort was made, which was unsuccessful, or at least only partially successful, to impose somewhat similar, or parallel restrictions upon the bishops of the smaller towns, and less important cities. We can, to some extent, trace the efforts which were made to reduce the bishops of minor sees under a yoke of subjection to the metropolitans, or bishops of important cities, analogous to the bondage, under which the country and village bishops had

been already reduced to their superiors in the towns. But all this, bad as it was, proves that even then, there was no question of difference of *Order* between bishops and priests, but that all these changes were introduced, as merely affecting Church government, and the discipline of the Clergy. Then, the new discipline having been established upon a firm basis, and the ancient rights of the priesthood been forgotten through disuse, a subsequent age saw arguments, drawn from these very episcopal encroachments, applied to prove that there was an apostolically, or even a Divinely instituted difference between the Episcopate and the Presbyterate.

The 10th Canon of that Council of Antioch, which was held in or about 342, and which is sometimes called the Fourth Council of Antioch, should be studied in connection with the 9th Canon of the same Council. The 9th Canon defines the relations of suffragans, using the term in its later sense, and not to signify the Chorepiscopi, to their metropolitans. These suffragans are reduced to much the same dependence upon their Metrans, and complete subjection to them, as the country bishops were in process of being reduced under the suffragans.

Then follow the significant enactments of the 10th Canon—Τοὺς ἐν ταῖς κώμαις, ἢ ταῖς χώραις, ἢ τοὺς καλουμένους χωρεπισκόπους, εἰ καὶ χειροθεσίαν εἶεν ἐπισκόπων εἰληφότες, ἔδοξε τῇ ἀγίᾳ συνόδῳ εἰδέναι τὴν ἑαυτῶν μέτραν καὶ διοικεῖν τὰς ὑποκειμένας αὐτοῖς ἐκκλησίας, καὶ τῇ τούτων ἄρκεισθαι φροντίδι καὶ κηδεμονίᾳ, καθιστᾶν δὲ ἀναγνώστας, καὶ ὑποδιακόνους, καὶ ἐξορκιστὰς, καὶ τῇ τούτων ἀρκεῖσθαι προαγωγῇ· μήτε πρεσβύτερον, μήτε διάκονον χειροτονεῖν τολμᾶν διχὰ τοῦ ἐν τῇ πόλει ἐπισκόπου, ἢ ὑπόκεινται αὐτός τε καὶ ἡ χώρα. Εἰ δὲ τολμήσειε τις παραβῆναι τὰ ὀρισθέντα καθαιρεῖσθαι αὐτὸν καὶ ἥς μετέχει τιμῆς. Χωρεπίσκοπον δὲ γίνεσθαι ὑπὸ τοῦ τῆς πόλεως ἢ ὑπόκειται ἐπισκόπου.¹

¹ There is a passage in the Synodical Letter of the bishops, priests, deacons and laity who met in the great Provincial Council of Antioch, which condemned Paul of Samosata, which has not, as far as I am aware, been hitherto noticed in this connection. But it deserves careful study—Οἷα, i.e. hymns sung in his honour, καὶ τοὺς θωπεύοντας αὐτὸν ἐπισκόπους τῶν ὁρίων ἀγρῶν τε καὶ πόλεων, καὶ πρεσβυτέρους ἐν πρὸς

This Canon may be thus translated—‘It has seemed good to the sacred Synod that those who are in villages, or in the country, or who are called Chorepiscopi, even if they have received the ordination of bishops, should know their own position, and manage the Churches subject to them, and supply what is sufficient for the care and administration of such, and appoint readers, and sub-deacons, and exorcists, and be satisfied with presiding over those: and not to dare to ordain a presbyter or deacon, apart from the bishop of the city, to which both they themselves and their district is subject: But if any one should venture to transgress what has been determined, let him be deposed even from the honour which he enjoys. And let a Chorepiscopus be appointed by the bishop of the city to which he is subject.’ The use of the word γίνεσθαι, instead of χειροτονεῖν, would seem to imply that the Chorepiscopus was already ordained either bishop or presbyter when appointed to his office in the country; and that being a presbyter-bishop as to his *Orders*, he was eligible for the *office* of Chorepiscopus.¹

τὸν λαὸν ὁμιλίαις καθήντι διαλέγεσθαι. Eus. II. E. vii. 30. Here we actually have ‘bishops of the neighbouring fields,’ translating literally, to Antioch, nearly a century before the Council held in that city, in 342. They must be the same persons as those Chorepiscopi in villages, or in the country, which the Canon speaks of. Can any human being hold the opinion that these bishops of scattered hamlets were a higher Order of men than the city presbyters, than such men, for instance, as that Malchion, Presbyter of Antioch, who took the lead in the condemnation of Paul and his expulsion from the Church, and whose name is inserted in the Acts of the Council, together with a few of the chief bishops?

¹ Natalis Alexander endeavours to prove from this Canon, that the Chorepiscopus was indifferently either a bishop or a presbyter, in the modern sense of these words, but most frequently a presbyter. He argues, and with some force, that the Chorepiscopate was an office to which a person in Episcopal orders might be appointed. And this view derives some support from the 8th Canon of the First Council of Nicæa, which allowed Novatian bishops, conforming to the Catholic Church, to be made Chorepiscopi. But this Canon seems to have been framed to obviate what the Church of the fourth century was beginning to look upon as an unseemly spectacle—the existence of two persons bearing the title of bishop in the same city. Moreover Natalis Alex-

Having thus deprived these Chorepiscopi, or village presbyters of their ancient rights of ordination, the next step was to abolish them entirely. It was felt probably that they were not so easily manageable as the city presbyters, as not being so directly under the eye of the presiding bishop of the city. And this led, we may suppose, to the enactment of the 57th Canon of the Council of Laodicea: *Ὅτι οὐ δεῖ ἐν ταῖς κώμαις, καὶ ἐν ταῖς χώραις καθίστασθαι ἐπισκόπους, ἀλλὰ περιοδεύτας· τοὺς μέντοι ἤδη προκαταθέντας μηδὲν πράττειν ἄνευ γνώμης τοῦ ἐπισκόπου τοῦ ἐν τῇ πόλει· ὡσαύτως δὲ καὶ τοὺς πρεσβυτέρους μηδὲν πράττειν ἄνευ τῆς γνώμης τοῦ ἐπισκόπου.* (It is decreed) that it is not necessary to appoint bishops in the villages, and in country places, but visitors; and that those bishops who have been previously appointed (in villages) should do nothing without the knowledge of the bishop in the city, and likewise that the presbyters should do nothing without the knowledge of the bishop. This Canon too has been falsified. But in this case Du Pin is the guilty party. He actually translates, *ἐν ταῖς χώραις*, by ‘in towns.’

It would be a very useful work, if some impartial scholar, with leisure, would carefully examine all the extant Canons of those very numerous Greek Councils which were held, principally in Asia Minor and Syria, in the fourth century. The results of such an examination would not be unimportant.

I do not think it necessary to go into the question of whether the Chorepiscopi were, in what have in later times been called, Episcopal, or Presbyteral Orders, for the simple reason that those writers, such as Bingham, who have discussed the point, have done so after an assumption, upon *a priori* grounds, that there was such a distinction of Order. But I prefer to state the following dilemma. If the Chorepiscopi were only presbyters, then it is undeniable that *until* the Council of Ancyra, they had the right to ordain priests and deacons; if, on the other

ander does not appear to have perceived that his general argument would prove too much for his purpose—for if the *Chorepiscopate* be only the name of an office, not of an order, then may the *Episcopate* be the same: for the Chorepiscopate is only a bishopric in a small place. Natal. Alex. Hist. Eccles. tom. iv. pp. 579, 580. Ed. Paris, 1699.

hand they were really bishops, ministering in villages, their numbers must have amounted to many hundreds in Asia Minor alone, yet positively less than a score of their brother bishops, in this Council of Ancyra, bishops who were nothing more than their equals, in every respect, presumed to deprive all these *bishops* of their most important function and privilege, the right of ordaining priests.

These Canons of Ancyra are signed by only eighteen bishops, of the dioceses of Asia Minor, Pontus and the East. Vitalis of Antioch signs first.

Natalis Alexander is the ablest writer of note, with whom I am acquainted, who endeavours to argue that the Latin Translations of this Canon of Ancyra, which insert ‘*aliquid agere*,’ or words to that effect, in the clause of the sentence which relates to the presbyters of the city, are a representation of the Greek ‘*τι πράττειν*,’ which he thinks must have existed in the original Text. But he can give no other justification of his assertion, except that in two other Latin Versions, viz. those of Adrian I., and a Capitulary of Charlemagne, the words occur. But this is slender and unsatisfactory proof indeed, to allege against the original Greek form, and the Latin Version which forms a part of the code of the Roman Church.

There is however one portion of Natalis’ Dissertation upon Chorepiscopi which is very valuable, and that is the Paragraph, in which he sums up the eminent Roman Catholic Theologians who have argued in favour of its being at least a probable opinion, that simple presbyters can, by a dispensation from the Supreme Pontiff, ordain other presbyters.

‘Non improbabile visum est doctis quibusdam viris, simplices sacerdotes, ex Summi Pontificis delegatione posse alios ordinare. Eam sententiam amplectuntur Innocentius IV. in cap. *Quanto, de Consuetudine*, ubi et Silvestrum Canonici Juris consultissimum pro ea laudat; Angelus de Clavasio in Summa, verbo *Ordo*, num. 11; Hugo et Hugolinus veteres Canonici Juris interpretes a Sancto Raymundo sæpe laudati; Panormitanus in Cap. *Quanto, de Consuetudine*, num. 9; Bernardus primus Decretalium Commentator. Eandem opinionem tuentur e veteribus Scholasticis, Gulielmus Antisiodorensis, Lib. 4. Summa, Tract. 8, 9. 1; Petrus Aureolus in 4. dist. 24. Neco-

laus de Orbellis in 4. Sentent. dist. 7. quæst. 1. Ex Theologis recentioribus eandem probabilem censent Vasquez, in 3. p. disp. 245. cap. 3. et 4. Præpositus de Sacramento Ordinis, quæst. 1. n. 124. Meratius disp. 8. de Ordine, Sect. 2.¹ Natalis concludes by giving his own opinion in the following words—‘Hæc tamen sententia quæ Traditioni repugnat, sequenda non est.’ He appears to have got into trouble with the Roman Censorship for the foregoing passage, as it stood in his first Edition: but he made his peace by explaining, that he did not himself think it a probable opinion that presbyters could ordain others by delegation from the Supreme Pontiff, but only that the eminent writers whom he cited, and who have never been condemned by the Church, thought it probable.

To sum up the question—The Pope represents the dispensing power of the Church, by which She, as the Body of Christ, has power to dispense with any merely ecclesiastical rule, or ordinance. If then a presbyter is able to ordain by delegation from the Pope, it follows that the restriction of ordination to bishops is an ecclesiastical arrangement, not a Divine Precept. And that this is so, all antiquity clearly shows. And this vital truth has never yet been formally condemned by any Christian Church. There is little essential difference between the writers cited by Natalis and the Anglican Hooker, who held that, under certain circumstances, Presbyterian Ordination would be valid.

It is not necessary to pursue this question further. A careful examination of the Canons of almost innumerable Provincial Councils will show that when a distinction is spoken of, or implied, as existing between a bishop and a priest, it is either said in so many words, or else it is an inference easily gathered, that that distinction was a matter of ecclesiastical arrangement, not of Divine institution.

The Canons of only one of these Councils are here referred to, because they show this in an unmistakable manner. This was the Second Council of Seville, held in 619, under St. Isidore.

By the 5th Constitution, a presbyter and two deacons of the Church of Egabro are deposed, on account of an irregularity in

¹ Nat. Alex. H. E. tom. iv. p. 580.

their ordination. The bishop had sore eyes. He therefore only laid his hands upon them, whilst a presbyter recited the formula of ordination.¹

But deposition, it must be remembered, is not the same thing as pronouncing the Orders null and void. Nothing is more common in these Councils than the mention of deposition, both of bishops and priests, when there is no question of the validity, or invalidity of their Orders.

The 6th Constitution relates to a presbyter of Cordova, who had been unjustly deposed by his bishop. He is restored again, and bishops generally are forbidden to depose a priest, or deacon, unless their cause was examined in a Council.

Those bishops are excommunicated,² a much higher penalty than deposition, who presume to condemn them without examination, by a tyrannical power, and not by Canonical authority. It is added—‘A bishop alone may confer the dignity of a priest, or a deacon, but he alone cannot take it away from those to whom it has been given.’

The 7th Constitution is most important. It has reference to the Commission which Agapius, Bishop of Cordova, had given to certain presbyters to consecrate Churches and set up altars in the bishop’s absence.

The Council says—‘They do not wonder that such a bishop had granted such licences, because he was ignorant of Church discipline, having been raised suddenly to the sacerdotal dignity.’ The Council prohibits the practice for the future, and declares that though presbyters have several functions in common with bishops, there are some things forbidden them *by the ecclesiastical laws*. Such are the consecration of priests, deacons, and virgins, the erection of an altar, the blessing of Chrism. Presbyters may not consecrate a Church, nor confer the Holy Ghost by the imposition of hands upon the baptized: they may not reconcile a penitent in a public mass, nor send Circular Letters. And then the Council gives the reason—

¹ ‘Episcopus oculorum dolore detentus fertur manum suam super eos tantum posuisse, et presbyter quidam illis contra ecclesiasticum ordinem benedictionem dedisse.’—Labbé, tom. v. p. 1665.

² So says Du Pin, but the Canon as given by Labbé only speaks of censure.

‘All these things are forbidden to presbyters, because they have not the supreme degree of the sacerdotal dignity, which by the authority of the Canons is appropriated to bishops.’

It is difficult to see how anything could be plainer than the inference to be drawn from this Canon. The whole of the distinction between a bishop and a priest is based upon Canon Law: and every student knows that there is not so much as a trace of the Canon Law, before A.D. 250. Few would allow it so early an origin. And as a necessary consequence of basing the distinction upon Canon Law, the forbidding a priest to write Circular Letters is put upon precisely the same grounds as the restraining him from ordaining other priests, or consecrating virgins. Lastly, we see how the Canon Law has grown in the space of two centuries.

When St. Jerome and St. Chrysostom wrote, presbyters could do anything but ordain. In A.D. 619, there are all these additional restrictions. They could not even publicly reconcile a penitent.

Is it not time that the whole Catholic Church of Christ looked into that system of Canon Law, by which some say she is bound? ¹

¹ The original of this Canon is added in full, as it is hoped that the study of it will put an end, at once and for ever, in all candid minds, to the idea that there is any distinction between a bishop and a presbyter, except such as is based upon Canon Law, and upon mistaken analogies.

‘Septimo examine relatum est nobis, venerandissimum quondam Agapium Cordubensis urbis episcopum, frequenter presbyteros* destinasse, qui absente pontifice altaria erigerent, basilicas consecrarent. Quod quidem non est mirum id præcepisse virum ecclesiasticis disciplinis ignarum, et statim a sæculari militia in sacerdotale ministerium delegatum. Ergo ne ultra talis a nobis licentia usurpetur, communi sententia statuendum oportuit; scientes quia sicut presbytero † illicito consecratio est altaris, ita et constitutio. In divinis enim literis præcipiente Domino, solus Moyses in tabernaculo Dei erexit altare, solus ipse unxit; utique quia summus sacerdos Dei erat, sicut scriptum est, Moyses et Aaron in sacerdotibus ejus. Ideoque id quod tantum facere principibus sacerdotum jussum est, quorum typum Moyses et

* Labbé gives a various reading, chorepiscopos vel presbyteros, and adds himself, qui tamen juxta Canones unus sunt.

† Al. lect.—presbytero vel chorepiscopo.

APPENDIX C.

It is beyond the design of the present work to pursue, further than I have done, the history of the doctrine of Penance. But it may be useful to indicate some of the earlier sources of information to any students, who may wish to do so. Chief in value will be that greatest *cruc* in Ecclesiastical History, as it is generally held to be, the Council of Illiberis, or Elvira. An attentive consideration of the History of Hermas will go far towards removing the obscurity. Scarcely two learned men are agreed as to where or when the Council was held, or whether indeed there was such a Council at all, or whether itsso-called Canons are not an ancient disciplinary Code.

Aaron tenuerunt, presbyteri qui filiorum Aaron gestant figuram arripere non præsument. Nam quamvis cum episcopis plurima illis ministeriorum * communis sit dispensatio, quædam *novellis* et ecclesiasticis regulis sibi prohibita noverint,† sicut presbyterorum, diaconorum ac virginum consecratio; sicut constitutio altaris, benedictio vel unctio; siquidem nec licere eis ecclesiam vel altarium consecrare, nec per impositionem manus fidelibus baptizatis,‡ vel conversis ex hæresi Paracletum Spiritum tradere, nec chrisma conficere, nec chrismate baptizatorum frontem signare, sed nec publice quidem in missa quenquam pœnitentium reconciliare, nec formatas cuilibet epistolas mittere. Hæc enim omnia illicita esse presbyteris,§ quia pontificatus apicem non habent, quem¶ solis deberi episcopis auctoritate canonum præcipitur; ut per hoc et discretio graduum et dignitatis fastigium summi pontificis demonstraretur; sed neque coram episcopo licere presbyteris in baptisterium introire, nec præsentem antistitem infantem tingere aut signare, nec pœnitentes sine præcepto episcopi sui reconciliare, nec eo præsentem sacramentum corporis et sanguinis Christi conficere, nec eo coram posito populum docere vel benedicere aut salutare, nec plebem utique exhortari.—Labbé, *ibid*.

* Al. lect. mysteriorum.

† A. L. quædam tamen auctoritate veteris legis, quædam novellis.

‡ Baptizandis.

§ Presbyteris, vel chorepiscopis.

¶ Quod.

There is no royal road for settling such difficult historical questions as these. Each Canon must be examined separately; and bearing in mind what we have learned from the controversies of the Primitive Church, we shall be able to assign to each its *approximate* date. More than this, we must not expect. We shall see that to a considerable extent, the ancient discipline for which Tertullian contended was still in force when these Canons were drawn up. But it was beginning to be relaxed. Canon Law, properly so called, was in its infancy. And it was working in the direction of systematising rules and traditions, which had come down from still earlier times. These rules and traditions it was adapting to the ever-increasing numbers, and the ever-changing outward circumstances of the Catholic Church. The invaluable pages of Labbé enable us to detect, and to some extent to examine the state of things whilst this flux was going on. The disintegration of the old went on, *pari passu*, as it ever does, both in the physical and the moral world, with the formation of the new.

To give a few instances of what is meant.

The very first Canon runs—‘Placuit inter eos, qui post fidem baptismi salutaris, adulta ætate, ad templum idolatraturus accesserit, et fecerit, quod est crimen principale, quia est summum scelus, *placuit nec in finem, eum communionem accipere.*’¹

The substance of this Canon must have been the rule in force up to the Decian Persecution. It means, that after a lapse into idolatry on the part of a baptised Christian, there could be *no* restoration to the Church on earth. Thus far, adultery had not carried with her her great sister sin of idolatry, as Tertullian predicted she would do, a prediction which had not to wait much longer for its fulfilment.

Several of the subsequent Canons bear witness to the state of transition. They permit the restoration to communion, after a time, of those who had been guilty of idolatry, under various kinds and degrees of what may be called extenuating circumstances. See Canons 2, 3, 4.

¹ This of course is direct collateral evidence of the truth of Tertullian's statements. I do not envy any one who may attempt the task of evading or shaking it.

The 6th Canon is somewhat obscure. Its construction is very involved. This I believe is the result, not of corruption, or falsification of the Text. It is because the Canon itself received alterations from time to time, to meet the corresponding changes which took place in the Church herself.

‘Si quis vero maleficio (al. lect. veneficio) interficiat alterum, eo quod sine idolatria perficere scelus non potuit, nec in fine (al. lect. nisi in fine) impertiendam esse illi communionem.’ I have no doubt that the original form of this Canon was very simple. Not yet had murder, any more than idolatry, followed her sister. And apart from additions and alterations, the Canon, or whatever it was, ran to this effect—‘If any one shall have maliciously killed another, the Holy Communion shall not be given him even at the hour of death.’ But the irresistible cogency of Tertullian’s logic was not long in making itself felt. ‘We either detain her, or else follow.’ Then ‘*maleficio*’ was altered into ‘*veneficio*.’ And the Canon ran. ‘If any one shall commit murder, *accompanied by sorcery, or witchcraft*, he shall not be restored to communion, even in the hour of death.’ In this form the Canon remained, probably for some considerable length of time. At last, no sin was deemed beyond the scope of ecclesiastical forgiveness, and then, the ‘*nec*’ was altered into ‘*nisi*’: and the Canon received its final shape—‘the murderer shall not be restored to communion, except in the article of death.’

The 7th Canon is very interesting, as showing how the teaching of the *Pastor* was beginning to have a practical effect upon the discipline of the Church. ‘Si quis forte fidelis post lapsum mœchiæ, post tempora constituta, accepta pœnitentia, *denuo* fornicatur, placuit, nec in finem habere eum communionem.’ This was the opportunity of a second cleansing from mortal sin, the first being given in Baptism, which was offered to all penitents, and which Hermas was the first to preach and advocate in the Primitive Church. And as we have seen,¹ Hermas

¹ By referring to the quotations from Tertullian and Hermas in the preceding pages, and comparing them with this Canon, it will be seen that *absolutely every one* in the Primitive Church, without a *single exception*, was agreed that a *Christian* falling into adultery a *second* time could never be restored to the communion of the Church on

introduced a new technical terminology, calling Baptism, as to its effect, the *remission* of sins—the second cleansing, *repentance*, or as it would have been called in later ages, the Sacrament of Penance. The complete germ of the whole of the doctrine of Penance as held and practised in the Roman Catholic Church is contained in the treatise of Hermas.

The 8th Canon is equally instructive—showing a gradual relaxation of the severity of the ancient discipline. Labbé gives it thus. ‘Item fœminæ, quæ nulla precedente causa reliquerint viros suos, et se copulaverint alteris (al. lect. alteri, et in hoc permanere voluerint) nec in fine communionem accipiant.’

It is perfectly easy to restore this Canon to its original form. It was simply a declaration of the rule of the Church, which was in force up to A.D. 200, that a woman leaving her husband, should not be restored to communion even at death. Then came the Pope’s edict, granting absolution to penitent adulterers: and its effect upon the Canon is seen, almost immediately, in the introduction of the words, which Labbé gives as a various reading, ‘et in hoc permanere voluerint.’

The 12th Canon seems to show, that although that portion of the Western Church, whose mind is represented in these so-called Canons of Elvira, complied literally with the Pope’s edict, they would not advance one step beyond it, in the direction of lenity. ‘Mater, vel parens, vel quælibet fidelis, si lenocinium exercuerit, eo quod alienum vendiderit corpus, vel potius suum, placuit, eas *nec in fine*, accipere communionem.’ This means that for an *aggravated* case of sins of the flesh, the ancient discipline was still enforced. And as the celebrated Hosius of Corduba signs second of the bishops *present*, when the Canons were thrown into the shape, in which they have come down to us, we may believe that to *panders* the Holy Communion was still denied, even at their last hour, as late as the close of the third century, or the beginning of the fourth.

earth. There was no power competent to grant absolution in such a case. This is *not* the doctrine of the Catholic Church at the present day. What then becomes of the assertion that the Church has never changed in doctrine?

And this, it must be remembered, was done, not by Novatians, but by an influential section of the Catholic Church herself.¹

Thus much for the practice of the Spanish, and probably of the Gallican Churches. The attitude of the African Church upon this great question may be learned from some passages in St. Cyprian's Letters.

In one of them he says—'And indeed among our predecessors, some of the bishops here in this Province thought that peace ought not to be given to adulterers, and wholly excluded adultery from the place of repentance.'²

This is evidence to show that a portion of the African Church, whether influenced by Tertullian, or whether following their own convictions, paid no heed whatever to the Papal edict. And these were not schismatics, but Catholic bishops.

There is another passage in St. Cyprian's Epistles, which will repay careful study in this connection.

'Quibus etiam satis non fuit ab evangelio recessisse, spem lapsis satisfactionis et pœnitentiæ sustulisse, fraudibus involutos vel adulteriis commaculatos vel sacrificiorum funesta contagione pollutos, ne Deum rogarent, ne in ecclesia exomologesin criminum facerent, ab omni et sensu et fructu pœnitentiæ removisse, foris sibi extra ecclesiam et contra ecclesiam constituisse conventiculum perditæ factionis, cum male sibi consociorum et Deum rogare ac satisfacere nolentium caterva conflueret.'³

This passage is instructive for two reasons. 1. It shows how all parties in the Primitive Church acted upon their own judgment, decided for themselves what was good and expedient, appealed to Scripture as interpreted by themselves, disregarded authority and tradition with equal readiness, when authority and tradition were not in their favour. 2. It shows how the present doctrine of Penance in the Catholic Church is, like most other doctrines, the result of a compromise, the effect of the balance of opposing forces. St. Cyprian is arguing

¹ See Labbé, Concil. tom. i. pp. 969 &c.

² Ep. 55, Cyp. Antoniano fratri.

³ Epist. 59, § 19, Cyp. Cornelio fratri.

against those, who not only admitted persons guilty of mortal sins to communion, for this he was willing to do himself upon Scriptural grounds, but who admitted them without *public* confession of their crimes, and without due performance of the prescribed *public* penance. That is to say, they not only practically accepted the Pope's decree, as far as adultery was concerned, but they went beyond it, in dispensing with *public* confession and penance. Yet they were only in advance of their age. What was done by these presbyters, who were denounced by St. Cyprian in such vehement language, is now done every day in the Catholic Church. Persons guilty of the most frightful crimes which the imagination can conceive, are absolved and admitted every day to the Communion of the Body and Blood of Christ, by Catholic Priests throughout the world, and that without any public confession, or penance whatsoever.

Thus we see how prevailing ideas about the unchangeableness of the Catholic Church are the exact reverse of historical truth, and that the heretics and schismatics of one age are the orthodox and the Catholics of another.

If, in the next place, we turn to the Churches of the East, we find evidence of the maintenance of the ancient discipline there, in Firmilian's famous letter to Cyprian. Firmilian only makes incidental mention of his view of the doctrine of Penance; we cannot therefore determine very precisely what it was. But he seems to have taken the same line about the irremissibility of post-baptismal mortal sin *by man* that Tertullian did.

‘Necessario apud nos fit, ut per singulos annos seniores et præpositi in unum conveniamus ad disponenda ea, quæ curæ nostræ commissa sunt, ut si qua graviora sunt communi consilio dirigantur, lapsis quoque fratribus et post lavacrum salutare a diabolo vulneratis per pœnitentiam medela quærat, *non quasi a nobis remissionem peccatorum consequantur*, sed ut per nos ad intelligentiam delictorum suorum convertantur, et Domino plenius satisfacere cogantur.’¹

Firmilian's letter should be studied as a whole, when it will

¹ Firmilianus Cypriano fratri in Domino. Epist. 75 in Goldhorn's Edition of St. Cyprian.

be seen that what he says, further on, of the forgiveness of sins by the Church, is to be understood of the remissibility of venial sins: agreeing in both points with Tertullian. ‘Potestas ergo peccatorum remittendorum apostolis data est et ecclesiis, quas illi a Christo missi constituerunt, et episcopis qui eis ordinatione vicaria successerunt.’ Tertullian, even in his Montanist days, would have assented to this: but he would have drawn, as he believed Scripture drew, a careful distinction between venial and mortal sins.

Firmilian does not seem to have ever heard of the Papal edict, to which we have so often referred. But from the way in which he speaks of Pope St. Stephen, we are sure that if he had, he would have poured out upon it all the vials of his wrath and contempt.

Theologians may possibly expect some notice to be taken of the great work of Morinus on the Sacrament of Penance, in connection with what has been said about the teaching of the Primitive Church, with reference to repentance and the remission of post-baptismal sin.

Morinus allows that the natural and obvious meaning of what Tertullian says in his *De Pudicitia*, is as I have stated it. But he brings forward various reasons which, in his opinion, weaken the force of Tertullian’s evidence.

1. Tertullian was a heretic. In all ages, it has been common for heretics to inveigh against the Catholic Church, and to misrepresent her doctrines and practices. Thus, because Catholics honour the Saints, heretics accuse them of paying them divine honour and worship, and thus of being guilty of idolatry.

It is curious that so learned and able a writer as Morinus did not see, that to say this was simply to miss the entire force of the argument really deducible from Tertullian. It was like the ostrich, to thrust his own head into a hole. Tertullian is not bringing any accusation against the Catholic Church. On the contrary, he is praising it, because upon the point in question, he agrees with it, so far, that is, as two, out of three chief, deadly sins are concerned: but he finds fault with a contemporary Pope because he had ventured to make an innovation in the case of a third deadly sin.

A true parallel, which Morinus might have constructed, would have been this. Catholics equally with heretics had always honoured the three great Apostles, Peter, Paul and John, especially by building Churches called after their names. About A.D. 200, a Pope undertook to say, that henceforth, no ecclesiastical honour should be paid to St. Paul. Upon this, Tertullian, a heretic, rises up and says. ‘The Pope and his followers are most inconsistent. The whole Church, including us heretics, has always honoured these three great Saints. You cannot deprive Paul of his accustomed honour without taking it away from Peter and John. Either let all be honoured, or else none.’

If Tertullian had said this, it would have been a perfectly fair inference to draw, that the Catholic Church *still* continued to honour Peter and John, as up to that time they had honoured Paul. Let any candid reader compare this with what Tertullian says about the rank which the three great sins of idolatry, adultery, and murder had always held in the Church, and her consequent refusal of restoration to communion of those who had been guilty of them; and he will see that the parallel is perfect. It would have been the greatest possible surprise, both to Tertullian and his Catholic opponents, had they been told that the former’s statements of facts were unfounded calumnies.

2. In the next place Morinus says, that Tertullian changed his opinion as to the remissibility of mortal sin after he became a Montanist.

This is possibly true; but it proves nothing with respect to the Church’s *practice*. The facts of the case seem to be these. There was, perhaps, always, from the days of the Apostles downwards, a school which thought that the *power* of remitting all post-baptismal sins, even the three so often mentioned, resided in the Church. The Author of the *Pastor* was the first to embody these ideas in a formal treatise. Still the Church never *acted* upon this supposed power until the edict of Zephyrinus, or Victor, against which Tertullian inveighs. Or, if any think that the Church did so act, before the Edict, they are bound, as Tertullian says, so very fairly, to give some proof of it.

3. Morinus refers to the arguments of the Catholics from Scripture, as showing that they believed the power of the

Church to remit all sins might be proved from the written word of God.

Morinus did not see it, but this is to give up the whole controversy. If those who profess to hold by authority and ancient tradition decline to fight upon that ground, and appeal to their own interpretation of passages of Scripture, that is really to give up the appeal to tradition and authority. It was as competent to the private judgment of Tertullian to interpret Scripture, as it was to his Catholic opponents, and his interpretation was just as likely to be true as theirs, as soon as they declined his challenge of an appeal to antiquity.

4. He appeals to Tertullian's own recorded statements in his *De Pœnitentia*, a work written before he became a Montanist, as affording evidence that it was the practice of the Church, at the time Tertullian wrote it, which was of course before the *De Pudicitia*, to give absolution for mortal sins.

This is by far Morinus' strongest argument, and deserves most careful consideration. After reading the *De Pœnitentia* over several times, I will proceed to give what appears to me to be the true state of the case.

Tertullian is speaking very strongly about the duty of confessing, apparently in public, *all* sins. This confession he calls by a Greek word in frequent use in the Septuagint and New Testament, ἐξομολόγησις. And he clearly speaks of it as a means of procuring the pardon of all sins, however heinous. But the question arises—By whom was this pardon given, and under what circumstances? Except for a single line in the *De Pœnitentia*—‘An melius est damnatum latere, quam palam absolvi?’ I should have thought that Tertullian, all through the Treatise, was referring only to that public penance of grievous sinners, in which it is clear from the *De Pudicitia*, Montanists were entirely agreed with Catholics. The difference between them consisted, as far as we can judge, in this, that the former declined to pronounce man's absolution over such sinners, but recommended them by prayers and tears to hope for the mercy and pardon of the Lord: the latter pronounced absolution over adulterers and fornicators. And I think that the passage just quoted from the *De Pœnitentia*, shows, that,

when Tertullian wrote it, he considered such ecclesiastical absolution lawful and valid. But although this is a fair and natural construction to be put upon his words, the grave and important question still remains to be solved—Was this absolution an innovation upon the *ancient* practice of the Church, or not? I must say, that to me it appears perfectly clear that it was an innovation. The *De Pœnitentia* must be carefully studied as a whole, and carefully compared with the *Pastor* of Hermas, and with the *De Pudicitia*. If this be done, it is my belief that it will be clearly seen, that when Tertullian wrote the *De Pœnitentia*, he wrote under the influence of the teaching of the *Pastor*: and that when he wrote the *De Pudicitia*, he had thrown off that influence, and returned to the traditional teaching of the Church which had prevailed before the publication of the *Pastor*. To give Morinus every advantage, we cannot suppose that the *De Pœnitentia* was written earlier than about A.D. 195. This gives ample time for the *Pastor* to have exercised a wide-spread influence, both upon individual thinkers, and upon the Church at large.

My reasons for coming to the above conclusion, that on this question of Repentance, Tertullian, as a Montanist, represented the earlier phase of Catholic tradition, are many. Some of them I have stated, or implied in the body of this History. But to deal, at present, with the evidence afforded by the *De Pœnitentia*.

The timid hesitating way in which Tertullian speaks of the gift of a second repentance after baptism is, to my mind, most significant. It is so totally different from his style when he is sure of his ground, when he believed that he could fall back upon the authority of immemorial prescription, or upon a clear interpretation of Scripture, authorised by Apostolic tradition. Let the student carefully examine such passages as the following, in the *De Pœnitentia*. ‘Hæc igitur venena ejus, sc. diaboli, providens Deus, clausa licet innocentie janua et inunctionis sera obstructa, aliquid adhuc permisit patere. Collocavit in vestibulo *pœnitentiam secundam*, quæ pulsantibus patefaciat; sed jam *semel*, quia jam *secundo*, sed *amplius nunquam*, quia *proxime frustra*.’ And let his cautious, timid way of speaking about this second repentance be compared with

his clear, bold, definite statements of the entire and perfect remission of sins given in Baptism.

Then again, compare the passage beginning—‘If you doubt this,’ namely the gift of remission of sins *once* after Baptism, ‘consider what the Spirit saith to the Churches: To the Ephesians, he imputes love forsaken, the Thyateirenes he upbraids with adultery and the eating of meats offered to idols,’ and so on. Then he adds—‘And yet he warns them all to repent, under threats indeed. Still He would not threaten the non-penitent, unless he would pardon the penitent.’ Adding, I think most significantly. ‘This might be doubtful, if he had not elsewhere demonstrated this profusion of His clemency.’ And then he quotes as Scripture an unknown, apocryphal Book.

What too should be carefully weighed is this, that every argument which he brings forward, would be in favour of what is the present practice of the Catholic Church—unlimited repentance, unlimited absolution. Yet Tertullian, as a Catholic, restricts this repentance to *once* and *once only*.

And we must remember that there never existed a clearer, or more logical mind than Tertullian’s. He would have seen in a moment, unless he had been under the temporary influence of a theory, that it was inconsistent to quote the unlimited invitations to the repenting sinner which he found in Scripture, and then restrict their benefit to a single application.

Anyhow, when everything has been said, it is impossible for the Catholic Church to escape the charge of innovation, for at least she has extended that gift of absolution, which every one in the early Primitive Church agreed could not be given more than once, to an unlimited number of times. The present theory of the Catholic Church is, that if such a thing were possible, as for a person to commit adultery every day, and every day perfectly to repent, he might, every day, receive the gift of absolution. This, of course, is only a theory, and in practice, impossible. Still from the mere doctrinal theory, the Primitive Church would have started in horror, as from a doctrine of devils. This is quite sufficient to show that the Catholic Church *has* changed doctrinally. And no amount of special pleading will be able to evade the weight of evidence.

It may very reasonably be expected, that modern Catholics, of all Schools, will deny the fact that there has been this change. But a simple denial will be useless. The Council of Trent says—‘Ante hoc tribunal, sc. pœnitentiæ, hos, qui se post baptismum *aliquo* crimine contaminaverint, tanquam reos sisti voluit, ut per sacerdotum sententiam, *non semel*, sed *quoties*, ab admissis peccatis ad ipsum pœnitentes confugerint, possent liberari.’ Sessio XIV. De Pœnitentia, cap. 2.

It is not often, of course, that the later Catholic Church is in direct conflict, *totidem verbis*, with the Primitive Church, upon a vital question ; but in this case she is. The whole Primitive Catholic Church maintained, that with regard to the cleansing from mortal sin after Baptism, the opportunity afforded was ‘semel,’ ‘*semel tantum*.’ The Council of Trent says, ‘*non semel*.’ Before these two authorities, the later and the earlier, can be shown not to conflict, a radical change will have to pass over the intellect, and the language of the human race.

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